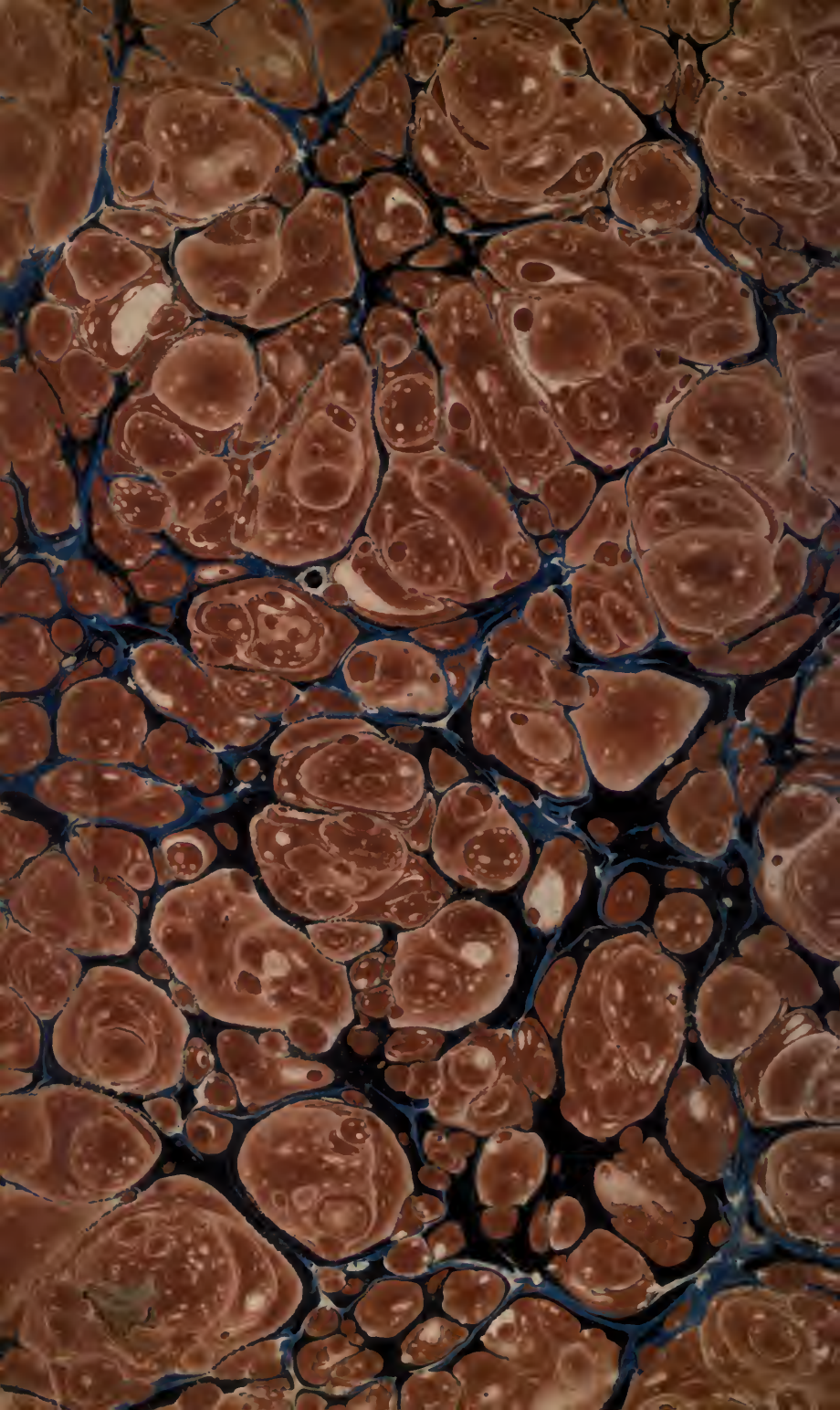
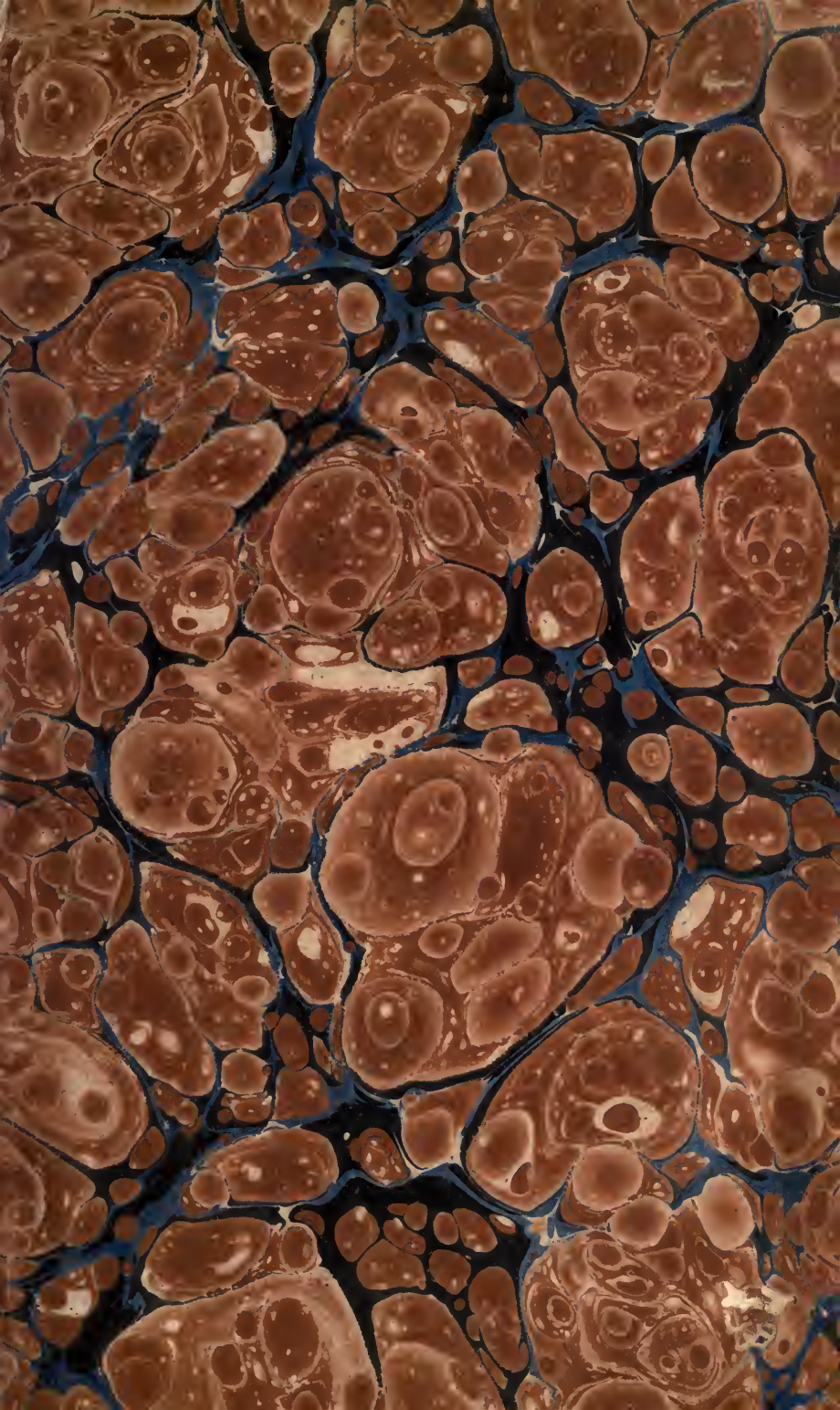


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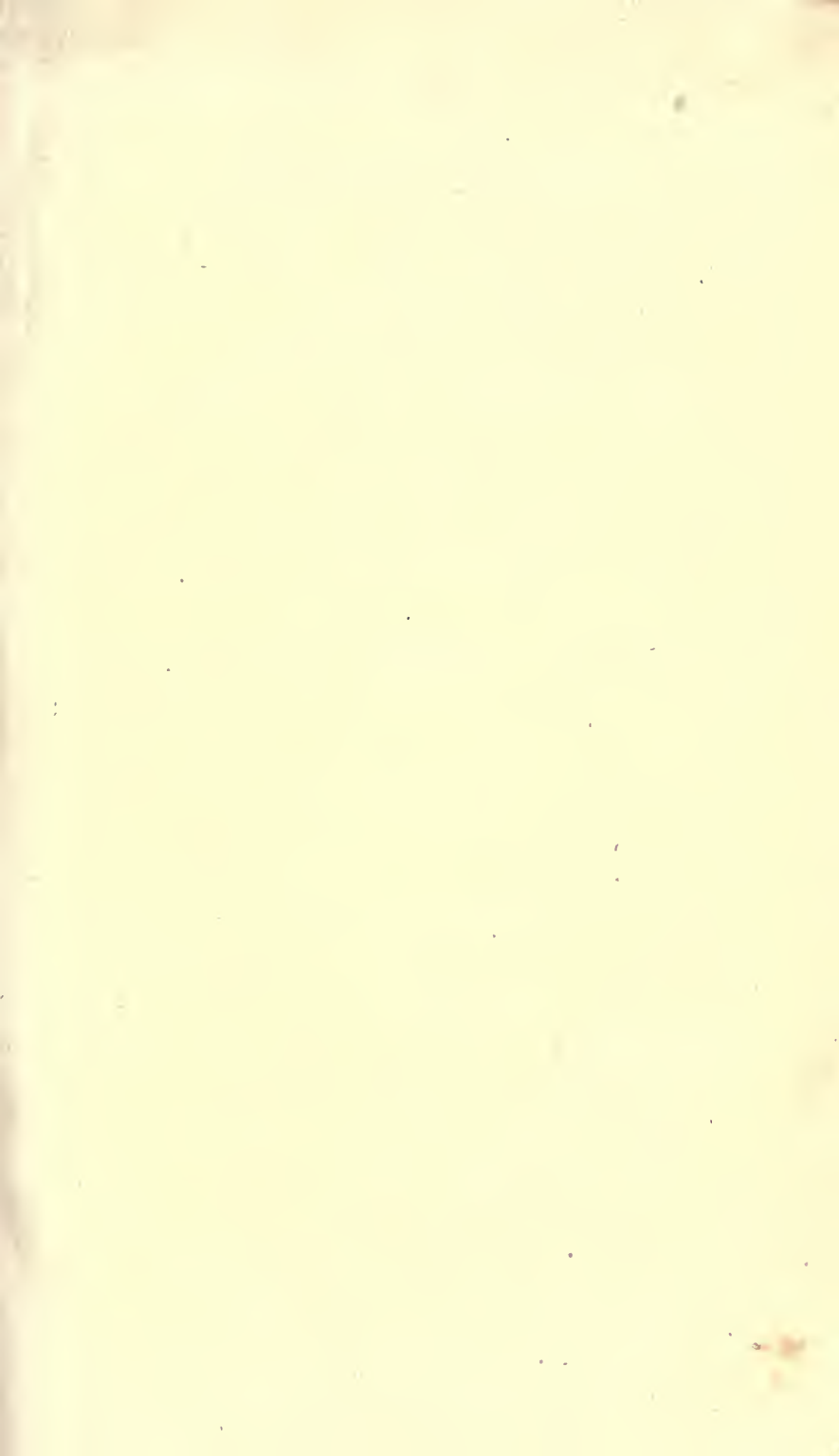
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Historical Sketches

OF

POLITICS AND PUBLIC MEN,

FOR THE YEAR

1812.

TO BE CONTINUED ANNUALLY.

LONDON:

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IN this work, it is attempted to give a rapid sketch of the events of the year; to suggest observations on the various topics of policy which have been under discussion; and to form an estimate of the disposition and views of the leading political characters in this country.

The object chiefly proposed in it is to lead its readers into a train of reflection, somewhat more enlarged and liberal than is usually prevalent on such subjects. For this purpose, an annual publication seemed preferable to one issued at daily or weekly intervals. The writer has then time to mature his views, and to contemplate the succession of events on a larger scale. At the same time, the public mind is likely to become more cool, and to open itself to considerations suggested by general principles, rather than by the transient passions of the day.

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In order to execute properly an undertaking of this kind, a certain detachment from party spirit seems indispensable. Here, however, it is not intended to lavish professions, upon which repeated disappointment has rendered the public so sceptical. It seems even too much, in such a country as this, for any man to assert himself to be entirely free from every such bias. But that the discussions in the present volume exhibit the real sentiments of the writer, deliberately formed, and expressed without any human hope or fear;—this is what may be asserted with some confidence, and what few, perhaps, who may favour it with a perusal, will be disposed to deny.

In a survey like the present, it did not appear necessary, that the close of the volume should coincide exactly with that of the year. A more convenient and satisfactory arrangement seemed to be, in each branch of the subject, to select a period, when a pause of operations suggested a corresponding suspension in the narrative.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE STATE OF PARTIES.

THE subject of the present chapter is, of all others, the most deeply and universally interesting to British politicians. The struggles between contending parties, and the hopes and fears inspired by the alternate preponderance of each, always constitute with them the grand subject of speculation. Compared with these the prosperity of the Empire, or the mightiest revolutions of foreign States, are objects only of secondary regard. Even that measure of attention which these great events excite, arises not principally from their intrinsic importance, or their influence on the general welfare. The great questions are, what

effect they are likely to produce on the permanence of administration? whether they will occasion a warm debate in parliament? whether they will afford to the ministerial party a ground of exultation, or to the opposition of attack?

It is not from entertaining similar sentiments, that we are led to give the precedence to this part of our subject; but as Britain is the central point whence the survey is to be taken, it seems natural to begin with some consideration of the talents and character of those by whom its councils are conducted. Before proceeding to analyse the composition of the different classes into which they have formed themselves, a few observations may be premised on their general features.

The most remarkable circumstance in the present aspect of the political world, seems to be the extinction of all the great political luminaries of the last age, without the appearance of any equal lights to succeed them. PITT is no more. That proud integrity, which extorted panegyrics even from his enemies; those views of foreign policy, which were generally sound, though sometimes misapplied through a too sanguine calculation; that knowledge of finance and political economy, which has not been paralleled by any modern statesman;—

these can no longer sway the public councils: nor could they now be seconded by the strong sense, the force of character, and indefatigable application of Lord Melville. No longer, on the other hand, does the same torrent of eloquence flow from the opposition benches, as when Fox, and Burke, and Sheridan were in their prime; when the forcible argument of the one, the impetuous declamation of the other, and the brilliant wit of the third, were displayed in full array, on the theatre of the British Parliament. Of all these, Sheridan alone remains, and remains the mere shadow of his former self. The absence of this constellation of talent, has certainly dimmed the lustre of the British senate, and rendered its character less imposing in the eyes of Europe. Yet has it not, perhaps, on the whole, produced an unfavourable effect upon the public mind. It has broken those chains of mental submission, by which the inhabitants of this country were formerly enthralled. The anathema laid on all who dissented, even in a trifling degree, from the opinion of Pitt or of Fox, is in a great measure removed. Men do not consider themselves as under a necessity so absolute, of becoming bound to either of the contending parties; and when they do attach themselves, they still reserve some liberty of judgment upon individual questions.

Another change no less remarkable in the present state of the two parties is, that there now exists between them no radical difference of sentiment. All the ancient distinctions of whig and tory, of loyalist and democrat, have melted down and disappeared. The tory doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, which were formerly defended by philosophers, and taught from the pulpit, have become entirely obsolete, and are equally disavowed on either side. On the other hand, that spirit of innovation, which was so strongly excited during the earlier stages of the French revolution, has been entirely suppressed by the calamitous progress and disastrous issue of that extraordinary convulsion. Another cause may be mentioned as having contributed to produce the same effect. The most distinguished members of the present opposition, consist of men who had recently withdrawn from the administration of which Mr. Pitt was the head. They left it, however, under a singular concurrence of circumstances, and disavowing any change of system and principle. They disclaimed, in consequence, all connection with that popular party, which in the transactions of the three last years has made so conspicuous a figure. Differing no longer from their adversaries as to the ends to be pursued, they stigmatize only the means employed for their accomplishment. A plan of desultory political warfare

has thus been formed, seemingly unconnected with any general views and principles. A curious proof of this will be afforded, if we compare the maxims of the present opposition with those of the great whig administration in the reign of Queen Anne. The vital principles of that body were two :—jealousy of Catholics, and active military co-operation with the powers leagued against France. It is needless to observe, that the principles of the modern whigs are on both these points completely the reverse. We do not impute to them this difference as a reproach, we shall calmly examine their arguments on either topic. We mention it merely as an instance of the vicissitudes to which political opinions are liable, and of the opposite nature of those, which may be covered under the same name.

From this general sketch it appears, that the parties which divide the British councils may be divided into three:—1. The Ministerial party, under which title we include all who have composed part of the administration formed in 1807, —2. The Opposition, or Whig party,—and 3. The popular party.

1. The Ministerial party.

The deductions from the strength of this body,

within the last few years, have been very remarkable. Not only have its two heads been removed, but it has also been weakened by the defection of the most powerful among its secondary members. The accession of Mr. Addington to power in 1801, produced a general breaking up of the two leading parties, and a confused mixture of all their elements. When this agitation subsided, singular changes appeared. Lord Grenville, and several of his most distinguished followers, in order to expel the Ministry then in power, had allied themselves to their former opponents, so intimately as to be unable to accept office, unless in conjunction with them. When Pitt therefore, contrary to expectation, resumed the reins of government, they were necessarily excluded. The death then of that Minister, which took place under circumstances peculiarly disastrous, seemed scarcely to leave elements out of which an efficient administration could be formed. The remaining members did not at first make the attempt, but silently gave place to the new coalition. Recalled to power by events, into the discussion of which we shall not now enter, they surpassed the public expectation. They not only secured the ancient adherents of Pitt, but gained over a new body of independent and thinking friends. They committed errors indeed, and those of no inconsiderable magnitude; yet, placed in most trying

circumstances, they supported the honour of the nation, and provided for its ultimate security.

The principal feature in the conduct of this administration, was an extreme and almost feverish activity. To this they seem to have been impelled, partly by a wish to remove the prevalent impression of their own weakness, and partly by the desire of exhibiting a contrast to that inaction, which had been the reproach of their predecessors. It fortunately happened, that emergencies arose in which it was not possible for Britain to exert herself too much; in which honour and interest alike demanded, that every nerve should be strained. They have followed, therefore, the line of conduct which events required this country to adopt. Expeditions have been ill contrived, and commanders ill chosen; yet Britain has sustained her character, as the bulwark of the cause of liberty, and the rallying point for the independence of Europe. We cannot, above all, omit to mention the glory which they have acquired by their continued support of the noble struggle so hardly maintained in a neighbouring kingdom. In the aid which they have given to it, they had to resist, not only the determined opposition of their political adversaries, but, on many occasions, even the general sentiment of the nation. Yet they persevered, and it is just that they should now

reap the fruits of their constancy. He, indeed, who rests his fame on a cause, in which all that is great both in liberty and loyalty is thus united, rests it certainly on an immoveable foundation.

In domestic arrangements, the measures of this ministry have exhibited the same activity, though not always so happily directed. Those commercial regulations, unexampled in their rigour, by which they have attempted to thwart the designs of the French Ruler, have entirely failed in their object. Neutral nations have been alienated by them, and we have injured ourselves more than we have the enemy. Other points of domestic policy might be mentioned, which do not appear entirely judicious, but these may be more advantageously noticed in the course of farther investigation.

Of all the members of this ministry Mr. Canning was undoubtedly the most brilliant. The present age cannot, perhaps, boast of a statesman of higher accomplishments. Eloquence, wit, genius, conspire in elevating him to this distinguished rank. No one, perhaps, feels more warmly for the interests and honour of his country, or has viewed with a more comprehensive eye their connection with the general welfare of Europe. A disciple of Pitt, whose tenets he

adopted with almost romantic ardour, he was, doubtless, a main instrument in calling forth that sound and enlarged system of foreign policy, which has thrown lustre on the administration with which he was connected. For all these reasons, we greatly regret, that he should no longer hold a place in the public councils. Yet, as the best statesmen are subject to infirmity, there are certain recollections which cannot fail to diminish our confidence in Mr. Canning as a Minister. He must undoubtedly have given his sanction to the ill-planned expeditions, and fatal selection of commanders, which led to the Convention of Cintra, and the miserable failure at Walcheren. His concurrence in these instances can the less be excused, since there actually appears to have prevailed among the other Ministers, such a respect for his judgment, and such a dread of his defection, as would have induced them to adopt any measure which he might have chosen to make the condition of his continuance in office. By what infatuation then, after having made a successful stand against the appointment of one unpopular commander, could he give his consent to that of another, whose incapacity was much more obvious. We cannot believe that Mr. Canning approved, or willingly consented to these proceedings; still was it a most blameable facility which could induce him, contrary to his

own better judgment, finally to lend them his countenance.

There is another exception which we are compelled to make, and it relates to the particular department in which Mr. Canning was employed. The state papers, indeed, published during his administration, and understood to have been the productions of his pen, are truly admirable, and display a majestic eloquence, almost unrivalled in such compositions. With respect to those which he drew up in his diplomatic capacity, our opinion is rather different; nor is he exactly the man we could wish to see conducting the negotiations of the British empire. Instead of that gravity and courtesy, which, even where there is real hostility, ought to distinguish the communications between one nation and another, he seems to delight in indulging a vein of smart and pointed satire, which, however just, or however happy, can never accomplish the object of the writer. Even allowing, what is very improbable, that it should force on the party so addressed, a conviction of blame, slender indeed must be his knowledge of human nature who supposes, that a consciousness thus produced, will lead to the adoption of friendly sentiments. According to a law, the operation of which is almost invariable, it will only exasperate the pre-existing hostility.

We allude particularly to the negotiations with America, in which it was peculiarly expedient that the *suaviter in modo* should have been diligently employed. Instead of this, the sarcastic and insulting tone assumed by the British Minister must, we suspect, have had a share in rendering irreparable that breach, which has so long been widening between the two countries.

In his choice of negociators, Mr. Canning, as was natural to expect, has indulged a similar taste. He has brought forward those who were likely to tread in his footsteps ;—a Frere, a Mackenzie, a Jackson : clever, ingenious, petulant young men ; who have displayed, indeed, flippant ability, but have not conciliated foreign nations, nor supported the dignity of the British character.

We are now naturally led to make some observations on that unhappy transaction, which led to the removal of Mr. Canning from office. So far as the affair was personal between him and Lord Castlereagh, we see very little blame that can be imputed to him. Mr. Canning had, it is true, formed an unfavourable opinion as to the incapacity of that noble Lord for the office of war minister ; a judgment which could not be very gratifying to Lord Castlereagh, but which did not afford any legitimate ground of

quarrel. As to suffering him to remain in office, after having received the power of dismissal, this conduct could proceed from no possible motive, besides that of tenderness towards his Lordship. The tenderness might be ill-judged; but it cannot fail to be observed, that Mr. Canning took the best means of enlightening himself on the subject, by receiving the advice of those members of the Cabinet, who were understood to be the personal friends of his adversary. We acquit him, therefore, of any personal ill-treatment of Lord Castlereagh; but we cannot so easily justify his conduct, when considered in relation to the public. He seems to have exhibited another example of that blameable facility, to which we have already alluded. He believed his colleague unqualified for the duties of his station; yet, with the power of removal, he suffered him to continue in office during a period when it was above all essential that this place should be filled in the most distinguished manner. How much better had it been to have exercised the power with which he was invested, and to have introduced in his stead, as war minister, the Marquis Wellesley, undoubtedly the man in the kingdom best qualified for that department. The miserable expedition to Walcheren would then have been avoided; the British army would

have remained unbroken; Mr. Canning himself might have been at this moment in office.

In expressing this wish for the substitution of another in the room of Lord Castlereagh, we retain a doubt whether the absence of that nobleman, considered in itself, would have been a beneficial arrangement. Without possessing those comprehensive views, which are essential to the formation of grand schemes of operation, he is understood to have other qualifications, in their place equally indispensable—plain sense; activity in his official duties; diligence and accuracy in all the details of business. These fitted him to occupy a station in any administration, provided it contained another individual endowed with higher qualities, to take the lead.

On the removal of Mr. Canning, Mr. Perceval, who had till then occupied little more than the second place, immediately became the ostensible *premier*. Few instances of such rapid ministerial progress as was exhibited in this gentleman are to be found. Previously to the death of Mr. Pitt, although he enjoyed, we believe, the good opinion of that minister, he was scarcely known to the public, beyond the limits of his original profession. Appearing first as an opposition speaker, his talents in that capacity became eminently

conspicuous; and he displayed a felicity of satirical wit, second only to that of Sheridan. A qualification so useful at that time to the party, soon placed him in its foremost ranks. On the accession of his friends to power, his knowledge of finance recommended him to a situation, to which the function of prime Minister had long been attached. Though not at first understood to act in that character, he made continual advances in power and influence. As a speaker, indeed, his talent for wit and satire no longer found scope. But his various information, his readiness at reply, and that command of temper, which was apt to fail some of his colleagues, rendered him the very best man for maintaining the daily round of parliamentary warfare. His address and powers of insinuation have shewn him peculiarly fitted for acquiring and securing the favours of Royalty. Thus he possessed thoroughly, all the requisites for maintaining himself in office; and was enabled to triumph successively over competitors, who possessed a higher reputation, and more splendid qualifications. In considering the application of this influence to the direction of public measures, we are somewhat more doubtful; being disposed to entertain an opposite opinion as to some of those which were considered peculiarly his own; but upon these subjects it is not yet time to enlarge.

As a financier, his arrangements were judicious and respectable, without exhibiting any bold or original features. On the whole, he appears to have been formed rather for a subordinate member of an administration, than for the head; to have been a clever man, rather than a great minister. Such seems to have been his own estimate; for he is said repeatedly to have offered to others the place of premier; and it is affirmed that it was less by choice, than by the necessity of circumstances, that he was thrust into that elevation.

On losing the aid of Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Perceval sought and obtained the services of a new coadjutor, the Marquis Wellesley. We are not prepared to make this nobleman the subject of indiscriminate panegyric. We confess ourselves, after all that we have heard in their defence, still unable to reconcile our minds to those principles of political morality, by which Oude and the Carnatic were annexed to the British dominions. There are other circumstances, not connected with his public conduct, in which the example of this nobleman is not peculiarly edifying. But what we conceive is, that as a war minister, for planning and conducting military operations, he is not only superior to all his cotemporaries, but stands absolutely alone. To determine the mode, and

the places in which the war may be most successfully carried on; to suit the magnitude of an expedition to its object; and to appoint the persons best qualified to command it; this is a science in which no living statesman can rival Lord Wellesley. Simple as it may appear, it is one which previously to his appointment seemed to have entirely vanished from the British councils. We need only refer to the conduct of successive administrations on one single point. There cannot surely be a plainer dictate of reason, than that the chief command of a great military armament should be entrusted to a person of some reputation and capacity. No interest which any ministry can derive from an inefficient choice, will at all counterbalance the loss of credit consequent on the failure which it occasions. Yet the appointments of a Whitelocke, a Dalrymple, a Chatham, sufficiently shewed how little regard former ministers had paid to considerations so obvious. Under the auspices of the Wellesleys, however, we have seen a new system established: means suited to their ends; effective employments ably filled; and a plan of operations adopted, in which enterprize and caution are happily combined. This has exalted the glory of the British name, and raised a mighty barrier against the progress of the oppressor of Europe. In considering then the present aspect

of the world, when every hope of peace seems to have withdrawn into the distance, and when *bella, horrida bella*, arise on every side, we conceive the services of this nobleman to be of the last importance; and we almost apprehend, that any administration, of which he formed a member, would, for that single reason, be better than any other.

Entertaining such an opinion as to the merits of this nobleman, we observe with regret, not only that he no longer holds a place in the cabinet, but that there are circumstances which seem likely to prevent his ever attaining his due weight in the British councils. To all our politicians, both in town and country, the favourite amusement consists in reading and pondering the debates in parliament; and their most serious occupation, in canvassing the respective merits of the different speakers. The consequence is, that the reputation of every statesman chiefly depends upon the appearance he makes in that assembly. Wisdom of words is valued more highly than wisdom of action. Lord Wellesley speaks well, but he speaks seldom; he has no talent for debate or reply; he can merely make a studied oration.—It appears from some expressions which dropt from him in the course of the late correspondence, that he considers what is called managing the

house, as an intolerable drudgery. It suits him better to issue his mandates from the recesses of oriental pomp, than to force them through the stubborn and clamorous resistance of a British opposition. He is not aware, that he thereby renounces the only mode practicable in this country of acquiring public consideration. That parade and splendour, which dazzled the east, are of no estimation in the eyes of republican London. Thus the glory of his measures was reaped by those who avowed and defended them; and he gradually sunk into a subordinate member of that cabinet, in which he was entitled to take the lead. In regard to its interior arrangements, too, he lay under disadvantages. In consequence of long residence abroad, he had not attached to himself any body of statesmen; nor had he taken any position, which could make him be regarded as the successor and representative of Pitt. He either wanted or disdained to use, that dexterity and address, by which the minds of men are managed and conciliated. Nothing remained to support him, except the weight of a high reputation, unaided by popularity, or by the power of rendering those services to which a ministry look for the support of themselves in office. The Marquis, unable to brook any appearance of acting a secondary part, withdrew from the ministry, and formed the design of establishing himself upon a

different basis—with what success will appear in our next chapter.

2. The Opposition.

Few political parties have presented a larger aggregate of talents and reputation, than was united in the late ministry at its first formation. The yet unbroken strength of the Whigs had been reinforced by a large body of the most respectable among their ancient opponents. Even those who dreaded the tendency of their measures, presumed not to doubt, that they would be ably and vigorously pursued. The fact, however, is, no ministry ever exhibited more manifest symptoms of imbecility ; and scarcely could the most ardent of its votaries assert, that any thing had been done corresponding to their high expectations. We are at a loss to account fully for a deficiency so remarkable. There was a want of union and coherence between the different parts ; a want of some acknowledged chief to give an impulse to the whole. Talents acting in opposite directions, neutralised each other, and weakness was the result. There was a peculiar infelicity in the selection of the persons, who were appointed to fill the two most important departments—those of finance and of war. Lord Henry Petty was a young man of considerable promise ;

and, in his studies, which he had just completed, had made some figure; so that, if allowed to proceed in the regular course, he might have risen to a respectable rank among modern statesmen. Unfortunately, it happened that he was precisely of the age at which Pitt had made his first accession to power: hence it was immediately concluded, that since Pitt, in spite of his youth, had become a great minister, Lord Henry Petty, because of his youth, must become the same. He was at once installed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and left, unaided, to provide for the immense wants of the nation. He proved to be entirely destitute of resources. Two plans of taxation, the refuse of the port folio of his predecessor, were brought forward, and immediately abandoned; and he was compelled to have recourse to a mere *per centage* on some former branches. The choice of a war minister was still more unfortunate. The arrangements for national defence, formed an object which was then viewed with an interest that absorbed every other.—These arrangements were entrusted to Mr. Windham, a character truly singular; possessing a great fund of wit and genius; one of the first scholars and first gentlemen of the age; yet a man in whom all these fine qualities were rendered worse than useless, by a certain wayward disposition, with which they were alloyed. This

temper displayed itself chiefly in an uniform propensity to adopt that opinion upon every subject, which was most directly opposite to the general sentiment. Doubtless, when a high point of right is to be maintained, to know how to brave public opinion must often be the first duty of a statesman. But to oppose any plan, merely because it is approved by every one else, is absurd; more likely to lead to a wrong than to a right course; and certainly ruinous to the credit of him, who ventures to indulge such a propensity. Mr. Fox, from whose judgment better might have been expected, instead of endeavouring, as Mr. Pitt had done, to restrain these aberrations, only employed the whole weight of his influence and oratory to press them upon an unwilling public. Windham was thus enabled to give full scope to his eccentricities. He began with insulting the whole body of volunteers; a measure of extreme imprudence, since they included nearly all that was most respectable in the nation, and justly thought their conduct such as to entitle them at least to gratitude. This gave a mortal blow to the popularity of the new ministry, which was scarcely palliated by a few military regulations that were really good; for in the details even of these there still appeared a want of enlarged views.— Whether the expeditions which signalized this administration were planned by him, we know not;

but upon them there has only been one opinion. Those to the Dardanelles, to Alexandria, and to the Rio de la Plata, exhibited errors, both in the original conception, and in the want of all provision of the means of success, to which it will be difficult to find a parallel. The expeditions of their successors were, for some time, not very brilliant; but there was not the same total disproportion of means to ends; British valour was not so entirely deprived of all chance of prevailing. Their armies, therefore, fought with disaster indeed, but always with glory; while with their predecessors, defeat had been aggravated by disgrace; and the British arms were humbled before those who had not been numbered among the military nations of Europe.

As a balance to all these errors, we recollect only two measures that merit much praise;—the abolition of the slave trade, and the adoption of a very judicious system of finance, to which it were well if their predecessors had more closely adhered. Upon the whole, however, they left office, divested of that popularity with which they had entered it; and the public with pleasure made trial of a class of statesmen of smaller pretensions, but whose performance, they hoped, might be more satisfactory.

The party, on quitting the reins of power, resumed their ancient appellation of Whigs; yet a radical change had taken place in their aspect and character. After the death of Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville became its undisputed head.— This nobleman, while the associate of Mr. Pitt, had been marked as the zealous enemy of all popular movements; and had taken an active part in allaying that effervescence which had been excited by the progress of the French revolution. In attaching himself to the heads of the Whig party, he had not made any sacrifice of honour or principle. The aspect of affairs in France was now such, as to induce all rational men to renounce or disavow those sanguine hopes and visionary projects, with which the original successes of that cause had inspired them. Upon all the fundamental principles of government and of the British constitution, a very near approximation had taken place between the two parties.— Circumstances, therefore, having dissolved the tie which bound together the members of the Pitt administration, there remained no longer any material obstacle to an union with their former opponents. Yet, though there was thus no essential difference of principle between the new and the old members of this coalition, their general tone of political sentiment was still very dissimilar. Popular favour, instead of being

courted, was now held at open defiance; and the various measures, for which a popular clamour had been raised, were not attempted to be carried even into partial execution. Of all reforms, economy of the public money is the most loudly demanded by the great mass of the nation; because it is the one in which private interest is most deeply interested. The situation of the new ministry was difficult; they were beset with numerous and eager claimants, whose services, long unrewarded, seemed to give them a title to some rich compensation. It accordingly happened, that their efforts to provide for their adherents, were made on a greater scale, and at a larger expense of the public means, than those of their predecessors, which they themselves had represented as enormous and utterly ruinous. The people were affected with extreme disgust; they contracted, not only a coolness towards this ministry, but a general distrust of the character and principles of all public men; a sentiment which has not since been eradicated. It is well known with what activity the popular party have availed themselves of this impression, in order to render themselves the sole objects of the people's confidence. It was by them, indeed, that hostilities were first commenced; they openly avowed their contempt of the Whigs, and their preference even of their opponents, since it was necessary to choose.

The heads of that party treated this declaration with silent contempt; and, entrenched in conscious dignity, spurned all attempts to gain over their revolted companions. The breach became thus complete; and the popular spirit which, after having lain some time dormant, burst forth soon after with extraordinary activity, was neither seconded by the Whigs, nor made to afford them any support. Lord Grenville now associated himself in political supremacy with Lord Grey, a former adherent, indeed, of Fox; but whose dispositions and character were entirely congenial to his own. A proud, aristocratical tone, was thus given to the party; it steered a steady and respectable course, but without any thing which could tend to conciliate the favour of the multitude.

There is certainly no one among our present race of statesmen who possesses a higher respectability both of public and private character, than Lord Grenville. Experience, integrity, and a lofty sense of honour, form its well established basis. His talents place him, if not in the first class, certainly at the very head of the second. The speeches made by him, as prime minister, particularly pleased us. They contained that dignified and candid exposition of the motives by which he was guided, that appeared best to become the situation in which

he stood. They were devoid of that flippancy and invective from which our parliamentary speakers can seldom refrain. No one perhaps is better qualified to be the representative of the national aristocracy. Yet, with all these distinguished qualities, there is still one circumstance, which, while the aspect of Europe remains unchanged, makes us earnestly deprecate the restoration to power of this nobleman. We allude to those principles of foreign policy, upon which he acted while in office, and which he has since supported with almost fanatical zeal. This was the only point of opinion which he decidedly changed upon his coalition with Mr. Fox.— We believe it to be a general observation, that when any man does not entirely coincide with the party he has embraced, he feels a propensity to push as far as possible those points in which he feels a cordial agreement. Lord Grenville had been the forward promoter of a very opposite system; yet there were not wanting motives which might fairly induce him to make the change; and we truly believe, that he was swayed by no other. It will soon appear how very erroneous we account his opinion.

Lord Grey is not quite so much a favourite with us, as Lord Grenville. His talents are great, and universally acknowledged; and his character

exhibits the same feelings of honour and pride, which distinguish that of his coadjutor. These however, appeared to be combined with a much greater measure of heat and impetuosity. His speeches in Parliament, even while minister, and the leader of the house of Commons, were far from being distinguished by the same calmness and dignity. They were rash, precipitate, and strongly tinctured with party zeal. During his short continuance in office, no department was entrusted to him so exclusively, as to enable us to form an opinion of his talents for action. He has been named as the contriver of the expeditions to Alexandria and the Dardanelles; which would afford certainly a very unfavourable inference. But as we know not that this offspring has ever been acknowledged, there seems no sufficient ground for ascribing it to the noble Lord.

The rest of the present Whigs, with Lord Holland at their head, differ very materially in views and principle from these aristocratical leaders. They are kept, however, in subjection, by a superior weight both of talents and parliamentary influence. A necessity of yielding is also produced by the common interest of opposing those in power. The unbending character of those noblemen, their independence,

and almost indifference, in regard to office, render it absolutely necessary, either to conform to them entirely, or to separate. Thus the materials of this party, though not quite accordant, are still kept in apparent union.

3. The popular party.

The existence, in some form or other, of a popular, or country party; of one which systematically seeks to maintain, and even extend the rights of the people; to restrain and diminish the authority of the crown; seems almost essential to the British constitution. It forms a salutary check upon the excesses of power. It were probably impossible, otherwise, to preserve the balance of the constitution. Since the time, therefore, that the House of Commons rose to its present importance, the whig and tory, the court and country parties have uniformly divided its councils. The men thus ranged in opposition, originally consisted of a large proportion of the landed aristocracy, united with, and seconded by the great mass of the populace. These two bodies, however distinct in their description and character, acted for a long time with remarkable unanimity. It was not till the era of Mr. Wilkes, that the popular, or democratic body, shewed a disposition to emancipate itself from its aristo-

cratical leaders. That celebrated demagogue first erected the standard of the people against the Commons: and supported by the tumultuous applause of the multitude, set all parties alike at defiance. On his disappearance, the democratic spirit seems to have slept, till it was stimulated anew by the effervescence of the French revolution. It is unnecessary to recal to our readers' recollection, the memorable symptoms which it then exhibited. Towards the close of the century, however, a change took place in the public mind; decidedly adverse to those opinions which had before been so zealously and so widely circulated. The nation became tired of extravagancies, which were evidently pernicious, and which had no longer the gloss of novelty to recommend them; the spirit of anti-jacobinism then commenced its empire, and for several years reigned uncontrouled. Every thing bordering on innovation was proscribed; the very name of liberty was held in abhorrence; and a censure of the measures of government was branded as a symptom of revolutionary licence. An attempt was even made, and supported with considerable vigour, to revive the long exploded doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. But there is, in human things, and in the passions of mankind, a continual tendency to pass from one extreme to another. The enthusiasm for liberty,

and the rage for decrying the measures of government, began soon to revive. Circumstances were not wanting, to excite and inflame this spirit. The war had now been protracted to an unexampled duration; its necessity was founded upon principles which the vulgar could not always comprehend; and it had entailed a weight of taxation, which no nation, in any age, had hitherto endured. The progress of commercial prosperity had been stopped by the extraordinary exertions of an enemy, who occupied now nearly the whole extent of the European coasts. When the people suffer, it matters little who are to blame. Their resentment vents itself indiscriminately upon those who are within their reach. The rulers of the country are made responsible for all the evils which happen under their administration. When the opposition are at all popular, and have been long out of office, romantic hopes are formed of the benefits which might be derived from their coming into power; to them the nation turns for relief. It was thus that the Fox party had for a considerable time been regarded by all the discontented portion of the public. But that party had now been more than a year in office, without fulfilling any of the expectations, reasonable or unreasonable, which its votaries had cherished.—Disappointed and enraged, the popular party immediately concluded, that nothing was to be ex-

pected from the whole race of existing statesmen ; that the axe must be laid to the root of the tree, and that without some radical change, they knew not what, no national benefit could be hoped for.— This turn of mind was soon perceived by those journalists who live by ministring to popular delusion. Mr. Cobbett, who may be considered as a barometer of popular opinion, saw, and accommodated himself to the prevailing spirit.— While the reign of anti-jacobinism lasted, he had been the foremost to propagate those violent and intolerant maxims, which it had promulgated. Sagaciously perceiving that principles diametrically opposite had become more saleable, he now took the lead in the cry raised against all executive and legislative authorities. His readers, who are not persons accustomed to look very far, forgot or disregarded the contrast of his former doctrines ; those which he now maintained suited their present taste ; and his homely shrewdness, his coarse but powerful invective, were thereby rendered more agreeable. Such a tide of popular favour soon raised competitors. One started up, possessed of lively and popular talents, well calculated to amuse those who live to be amused. This writer shewed no depth of judgment, or extent of views, less perhaps than even his rival ; but he displayed a smart and pointed satire, a quickness of remark and repartee, which rendered his work

agreeable, and qualified it to be laid on toilets and tea tables. The measure of popularity attained by this writer, evinced by the frequent prosecutions, at last successful, commenced against him, seems to indicate that the democratic spirit had spread among men of the middling class, and of that above the middling ; for to them, not to the lower orders, was this composition suited.

The democracy of the present day, appears to us undoubtedly safer than that which arose under the influence of the French revolution. It does not absolutely point at the subversion of the established order ; nor, unless in some few and partial instances, has it given rise to any public disorder. Yet was there something noble and generous in the frenzy of the former spirit, which is not to be found in the patriotism of our reigning demagogues. It was connected with bold and extensive views of legislation ; it was combined with an enthusiastic zeal for science, and with even romantic speculations concerning the progress and improvement of the human mind. But there is nothing elevated in modern patriotism ; no science, no philosophy ; no disinterested zeal for the general welfare. It seeks merely to gratify the two lowest passions of the multitude ; the love of scandal, and the love of money. It teaches them to expect principally that some part of that

which is now taken out of their pockets, may be allowed to remain in them.

In estimating more particularly the character of this party, we may mention, as its most prominent feature, the habit of indiscriminately decrying all who hold any place in the administration, or any influence in the national councils. Their fundamental principle is, that all public men are profligate, and all equally so; all public measures alike ruinous; the national good equally disregarded in the cabinet and in the senate.—The benefits of such sentiments are obvious and certain. Abuse of the great has always, to the bulk of readers, been the most amusing of subjects; and no composition can be equally palatable, with that which is seasoned with this ingredient. It seems to avenge them of that mortifying disparity, which birth or fortune has placed between them. In amusing themselves at the expense of persons standing in such high situations, they rise in their own estimation; they seem to become greater men than those they despise. Thus the fruit, and perhaps the motive, of this strain of invective, is not difficult to discover. In regard to its tendency, we may observe, that to pronounce judgment without fear or reserve on all who sway the councils of their country, is the pride of En-

glishmen; the privilege and the duty of every public writer and orator. Such an expression, fairly and candidly made, would form a most powerful check on the conduct of public men.— But in order that it may produce its effect, it seems absolutely necessary, that some distinction should be made, between actions which are meritorious, and those which are otherwise. If a minister is certain, that whatever his conduct may be, it will be equally reprobated and vilified by the popular leaders, the dread of their censure ceases to be any check. Whatever his measures are, the result is the same. He has nothing left but to follow his own plan, and to present to them an iron front of indifference. Thus the advantage which might be derived from a body of men who, unconnected with party, passed an independent judgment on public measures, is almost entirely lost.

The next tenet inculcated by this class of politicians is, that no instruction is necessary to enable any one to form an opinion upon public affairs. The capacity for doing this, is represented as a mere matter of common sense, demanding no depth of reflection; no cultivation of mind; and no philosophical habits. The crude discussion of the smith's shop and the alehouse,

are reckoned quite sufficient to solve the most intricate problems in political economy. It is easy to see how convenient and suitable such a doctrine must be to the readers, and to the writers also, of such productions ; yet of all those maintained by this sect, we hold none to be more erroneous and pernicious. There is no science whatever, in which first appearances are so deceitful as in that of politics. No one, perhaps, presents objects so extensive, so various, so little to be comprehended by one glance of the understanding. As, too, it is the favourite system of nature in all her grand operations, to extract good out of evil, so the ultimate and lasting effects of any measure, are often directly opposite to those which are immediate and apparent. Those, therefore, who are capable of discriminating only what is directly before their eyes, must, on many occasions, be infallibly in the wrong. Until politics be considered as a science, and philosophical principles be applied to them, we cannot hope, with any certainty, for the attainment of truth.

Another, no less constant, theme of these writers consists in a violent outcry against taxation, and a perpetual clamour for its reduction. We have the less to say against this part of their conduct, since it may be considered as actually conducting to some useful purpose. Economy of the

public money is certainly, at all times, a most necessary and important object ; and never more so than at the present crisis. But what we complain of is, that they make the immediate saving of money, not only a great, but the sole criterion of the merits of administration ; they make patriotism dwindle into mere avarice. Yet, in the eye of the enlightened politician, honour, ultimate security, public order, the power even of giving aid to suffering neighbours, hold a still higher rank. We also object to them, that they confine themselves to vague charges of embezzlement, and clamours for radical reform, without examining and fixing upon those points which would truly admit of amendment. Errors and inequalities prevail in the British system of taxation to a less extent than perhaps in any other ; but they are still very considerable ; and he who scrutinizing every arrangement according to sound principles of political economy, should point out and press them upon the attention of the legislature, would be doing a real and great service. But little can be done by mere loose and vague generalities ; and by calling for violent measures, which could not perhaps, and certainly would not, be adopted.

Upon the whole, though we entertain no high idea of this party, we are not altogether sorry that

it should exist. A certain portion of this spirit, seconded as it is by a numerous body throughout the nation, serves as some check upon the abuses of power. It may force ministers to study economy in the disposal of the public money, and to act with caution in all their proceedings, to which, generally speaking, they are not very prone. We should be sorry indeed to see them taking the lead in public affairs; but have no particular objection to their exerting a moderate influence, such as they have done and are likely to do.

The brilliant era in the history of this party was certainly during the enquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York. This was a measure which, to the general satisfaction of the nation, it carried through parliament, amid the opposition or reluctant consent of all the other parties. The tumultuous support soon after given by the populace to the pretensions of Sir Francis Burdett, indicated no decay of its influence. From that time, however, it began sensibly to decline. The claims of Sir Francis were not so entirely unworthy of discussion, as the leaders of all the parliamentary parties were disposed to consider them. But there was so much rashness and violence in all his proceedings; and popular tumult

is a thing so disgusting to all sober and reflecting men, that a stigma was quickly affixed to the whole of this class of statesmen. Wardle, raised by a happy temerity to a station which he was unable to support, sunk rapidly into his original obscurity. Regularity of private deportment is not usually a virtue of democratic leaders; and those to whom we now allude had formed a connection, which did not tend to throw a veil over their infirmities. Mrs. Clarke was a woman certainly of some abilities, though by no means of such brilliant talents as were ascribed to her by popular enthusiasm. She was endowed with an effrontery, which secured to her entire self-possession in every situation; and she had that coarse and flippant wit, which suited her profession. Having no patriotic zeal, and no principle of any kind, except that of turning to the best account the notoriety to which she had unexpectedly risen, she proved as apt an instrument in the hands of the enemies of this party, as she had been in their own. Her disclosures attached a considerable share of disgrace, and what, for public favour, perhaps is worse, of ridicule, to the chiefs of the confederacy. These various circumstances tended to accelerate their descent from the eminence which they had attained. Yet, after all, the radical cause of their decline was merely,

that the public, who tire of every thing, tired also of them. Mrs. Clarke, and Wardle, and Burdett, and Folkstone, had afforded amusement for a sufficient length of time, and could amuse no longer. This instability of popular passion was strikingly exemplified, when, a very few months subsequently, the case of Sir Francis came before the Court of King's Bench. The decision of this question, which had convulsed the metropolis from one extremity to the other, scarcely ranked among the passing topics of the day. It occupied the corner of a newspaper, and we strongly suspect, was not read by many who had made it the subject of the loudest clamour. A similar apathy manifested itself when, some time after, the Duke of York was reinstated in that situation from which the popular voice had precipitated him. Rational motives might be assigned for this acquiescence. The Duke, it may be alleged, having, for offences not wholly inextinguishable, suffered the penalty of *suspension*, might now be reinstated with hopes of amendment. But the true cause we suspect to have been, that the public had exhausted themselves on the subject, and did not care to interest themselves any further respecting it.

From such causes as these it happens, that this party, which, a few years since, nearly engrossed

the public attention, has fallen considerably into the shade. There probably it will for some time remain, till novelty, and new emergencies give it again an opportunity of rousing the attention and the passions of the nation.

CHAPTER II.

MINISTERIAL AND PARTY CHANGES DURING THE YEAR.

THE commencement of the present year was marked by a change, in some measure apprehended before it was announced, than which none more remarkable occurs in the annals of party history. The Prince Regent, who, during the previous course of his political life, had been attached to the opposition, and who, at the commencement of his administration, had given testimonies of the continuance of his partiality, manifested now a decided preference for the men by whom his father's councils had been directed. We do not consider it within our province, to attempt any delineation of the character of this eminent person. Praise would scarcely be exempt from the suspicion of flattery; and censure upon a magistrate not removeable is incompatible with our views of the constitution. If public measures are disapproved, the proper objects of attack are the ministers, by whose agency they are carried into execution. They, by the force of public opinion, may be driven from their places. But the sovereign is judged incapable of

doing wrong, by a constitutional doctrine which ought to be borne in mind in all public discussions. Yet in the case of an occurrence so singular, it seems natural to make some enquiry into the causes which might have led to it.

It was with evident and avowed reluctance, that the Prince, on his first accession to power, determined to refrain from any immediate change of ministers. The motives of filial duty by which this resolution was dictated were applauded by the nation, and respected even by those whose views it had disappointed. So long, indeed, as it was expected that the King might speedily resume the reins of government, this line of conduct was conducive, on almost every supposition, to the public interest. A change, to be speedily followed by a counter-change, would have been much more hurtful, than a temporary perseverance even in a bad system. By this arrangement, however, ministers gained access to the Prince's person, and possessed themselves of the means of securing his favour, which they might naturally be expected to turn to their own advantage. Circumstances also, at this juncture, proved peculiarly favourable to their interests. Events occurred which threw around the British arms a lustre unrivalled since the days of Blenheim and Ramillies. In these successes, and in

the hope which they offered to sinking Europe, the Prince saw the triumph of that system which had been supported by the men now in power, against the determined and unremitting opposition of their political adversaries. This opposition of the latter had not been merely theoretical or parliamentary ; they had been in office, and had acted steadily upon the principles which they avowed. There could be no doubt, therefore, that, if the reins of power were committed to their hands, the peninsular war would be either entirely discontinued, or very languidly maintained. This appears to us to afford a fair and honourable ground of change on the part of the Prince. It is vain to allege, that the sovereign, as a party man, is bound to adhere to his party. The duty which binds him to study exclusively the interests of his people, is clearly paramount to every other : there had been much besides to loosen the personal ties which had united the Prince to the heads of the present opposition. Fox was no more ; Sheridan was disregarded, and entirely thrown out of the circle. The present leading members were men more respectable indeed in their private character, but not possessed of those engaging qualities, and that suavity of manners, which had distinguished their predecessors.

The change has been ascribed, by the disappointed party, to the influence of some private friends of the Prince. Without enquiring into the nature of the attachments to which this charge refers, we may be allowed just to observe that they were known to exist in equal strength prior to any indications of this alteration; and cannot, therefore, be considered as the sole or even principal cause of it.

The dispositions of monarchs are anxiously and eagerly watched. The public were soon aware of the turn which the Prince's mind had taken: the time came when it was to be openly manifested; the restrictions under which he had hitherto acted, expired; the period to which they had been extended, was that beyond which it was supposed no expectation of his Majesty's recovery could be cherished. In fact, all hope of that desirable event had been long extinct; every principle, therefore, of public and private duty, left the Prince at full liberty to follow his own inclination in the choice of ministers. Accordingly, on the 13th of February, he wrote a letter to the Duke of York, to be communicated by him to Lords Grenville and Grey; in which he expresses his wish that some of those persons with whom the early habits of his public life had been formed, would strengthen his

hands, and constitute a part of his government. He states his anxiety to avoid any indication of a general change of measures, on principles which we cannot but deem perfectly just and honourable, but which did not exactly coincide with those entertained by the noble Lords.

Lords Grenville and Grey appear to us on certain occasions to have been somewhat too fastidious in their rejection of office; but the present is certainly not to be included in the number. To be invited to strengthen the administration of Mr. Perceval, for the promotion of objects which they had uniformly reprobated, could scarcely fail to be considered as almost an insult; at best, the letter must have been meant merely as a polite intimation, that their system was not to be the reigning one. No other answer could have been expected, than that actually made by both the noble Lords, of a decided and absolute refusal.

This exclusion of the whigs was accompanied by an event, in our opinion, much more to be regretted—the resignation of Marquis Wellesley: we have already adverted to the circumstances which reduced both the influence of this nobleman in the ministry, and his reputation in the country, much below their proper level. These

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disadvantages were in some degree irremediable; yet he seems to have committed a capital error at the period of his first accession to power. Being then absolutely necessary to the existence of the ministry, he was in a condition to have dictated his own terms. He ought therefore to have secured the highest place in the administration, and to have introduced into the cabinet, a proportion of his immediate adherents; but, standing alone, and making no figure in parliament, he soon sunk into political insignificance, an humiliation which he could not brook. It appears that he had formed the project of another administration, comprising some of the statesmen who were then in the ranks of opposition. It was probably the same which he afterwards endeavoured to carry into execution, the merits of which we shall therefore have full opportunity of discussing. The Prince, however, apparently after some hesitation, declined this plan, and preferred that of Mr. Perceval.

The resignation of Marquis Wellesley did not make that impression on the public mind, which the importance of the event ought to have produced. The exclusion of the whigs caused a considerable sensation; but, unless among their immediate adherents, it was attended with no feeling of regret. Ministers, notwithstanding

strong parliamentary opposition, still went on; the public, not warmly attached to any party, were as well pleased to be ruled by them, as by any others. Their course was only interrupted by an event of the most unexpected and disastrous nature: it will easily be understood, that we allude to the assassination of Mr. Perceval. This dismal catastrophe seems not to have been at all connected with the aspect of the times, with any general cause, or with the principles of any party. It arose merely from disappointment and suffering, acting upon a mind vindictive almost to madness: this species of resentment is one to which ministers are exposed. All men are prone to exaggerate their own talents and services. Adventurers, of ruined fortunes, readily form projects of retrieving them, by advancing chimerical claims, the admission of which would raise them to opulence. The claim of Bellingham does not seem to have rested on the slightest rational foundation: he imagined himself, falsely it would appear, to have been wronged by the Russian government. An application made to the British ambassador, for the purpose of obtaining redress, was disregarded. For this refusal of the ambassador to forward his unreasonable demands, he made the government at home responsible; he conceived himself entitled to receive from them the same sum which he

would have recovered from the Russian government, had his complaints been favourably listened to. The claim, therefore, was such as ministers were bound to reject. The ferocity of this unhappy wretch was certainly tinged with madness. There was a very remarkable degree of unsound judgment combined with vigorous powers, and acute penetration. This was manifested not only in false conceptions, regarding his original claim, to which he was stimulated indeed by want and desperation, but much more by the expectation of acquittal, which, contrary to every rational principle, he to the last entertained. We have no idea, however, that there was such a degree of aberration, as could render it either just or safe to the public, that he should escape the punishment due to his crime.

Mr. Perceval fell thus a victim to the performance of a decided ministerial duty. His estimable character in private life, his suavity of manners, joined to a fate so tragical, threw an extraordinary interest over his memory. The provision made for his family, which was no more than necessary to support their rank, met with universal approbation, even at a time of extraordinary financial pressures. His bitterest political enemies were the most zealous to express their horror and regret, and their anxiety to

make every possible compensation to his domestic circle, for a loss so irreparable.

Before we quit this subject, there is one remark which we cannot refrain from making. By the correspondence published on this and other occasions, we discover the practice followed in the government offices: when any application is deemed inadmissible, no notice is taken of it, and no answer returned. Unless the demand be very extravagant indeed, this proceeding appears to us contemptuous and irritating. The complainant is naturally induced to cherish the suspicion, often perhaps too just, that his claims are unanswered merely because no one has ever considered them. It seems desirable that some court, or some department, should be charged with the examination of such claims; and that in every case, a distinct statement should be given of the reasons which induce government either to approve or reject them. There would then be a greater chance, if these claims were well founded, that they would be duly attended to: if otherwise, that the person might be less violently dissatisfied with his repulse. The two cases of Henry and Bellingham, in the course of a single year, shew the dreadful consequences which may follow from resentment thus kindled. The one, unrewarded for real, though not very honourable

services, went over to the enemy, and disclosed secrets of the last importance: the other, stung by the silent contempt with which his chimerical claims were treated, had recourse to a still more desperate and sanguinary mode of revenge.

Ministers had before, with some difficulty, maintained their ground; but now that they were deprived of Mr. Perceval's reputation, his dexterity in business, and talents for debate, a sense of weakness was immediately felt. They naturally looked for support to those men of distinguished abilities, who had once formed part of their administration, and who, although removed by untoward circumstances, still retained a general conformity of political sentiment. Overtures were accordingly made by Lord Liverpool, to Marquis Wellesley and Mr. Canning, inviting their accession to the cabinet. The application was too evidently the result of necessity, to find much favour in the eyes of these statesmen. The terms, too, in which it was made, did not exhibit any sense of their relative talents and reputation. It was announced, that Lord Liverpool was to be *premier*, and Lord Castlereagh to take the lead in the House of Commons; consequently, the members now invited were merely to act under them, and

to be instruments in their hands. No concessions were offered on the subject of the Roman Catholics, nor on any other respecting which they were known to differ in opinion. Ministers certainly committed an egregious error in making such a proposal. They thereby confessed their weakness, without affording any rational chance of deriving support. Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning returned the answer which was clearly to be anticipated; and which amounted to a respectful, but decided refusal, to enter the cabinet upon such terms.

The consequences of this imprudence followed with a rapidity which could scarcely have been apprehended. On the evening of the very day on which this correspondence was published, Mr. Stuart Wortley moved in the House of Commons, that a petition should be presented to his Royal Highness, praying that he would be pleased to form an efficient administration. The motion was carried, though by a majority only of 174 against 170. Struck by a blow so unexpected, ministers are said to have at first conceived desperate plans for averting its effects; if any such however were agitated, they were immediately abandoned, and the proper resolution was formed, of implicitly acquiescing in the decision of the House. The Prince, placed

in a situation so singular and critical, shewed still his fixed attachment to the party he had espoused: he sent, not for any leading member of opposition, not for any associate of his former political life, but for Marquis Wellesley, whose sentiments were known to coincide most nearly with those of the ministers whom he was forced to relinquish. The Marquis undertook the task with alacrity: previously to his late resignation, he had formed the plan of a ministry. His bold and comprehensive mind rose superior to all views of party: his principles were—guarded concession to the Roman Catholics, and a more vigorous prosecution of the war in the peninsula. On the former point, he stood between the two parties, but approached the opposition: on the latter, he differed in some measure from ministers, but very widely from their adversaries. His plan thus not coinciding with that of either, could be carried into execution only by the chief sway being vested in himself; and other motives, doubtless, contributed to make such an issue appear desirable. But the misfortune was, that the adherents on whom he could depend, possessed neither numbers nor influence sufficient to form the whole, nor even the principal part of a ministry. To remedy this deficiency, he seems to have conceived the idea of combining the two parties in nearly equal proportions; so that he,

with his small band, might be able to make the scale incline towards either side. He thus hoped to secure to his own little party, the supremacy over the two others, though each of them more numerous than itself. The scheme appears to us to be entirely chimerical. Coalition ministers are always weak, unpopular, and short lived; the discordant elements never unite; and the ill cemented fabric falls speedily to the ground. This is fortunate for the public, for if it were possible that all statesmen of ability could unite in one administration, they would be absolute, and might subvert the liberties of the nation. If however two parties who unite spontaneously for mutual advantage, are incapable of continuing to act together, what shall we say to an union effected by an extraneous influence, for the purpose of making them neutralize and counteract each other, and thus secure the predominance of a third, differing from both? Can it be supposed, that any statesmen at all respectable for character, will hold office upon such terms? Above all, it is utterly amazing to us how Lord Wellesley could believe, that Lords Grenville and Grey, men of such long standing, of such high influence and pride, could be brought to lend themselves as mere instruments in his hands for such a purpose.* We do not think that Lord Wellesley calculated so well for

himself and his own power, as he is wont to do for the fortunes of nations. It would have evinced, we apprehend, more prudence and knowledge of mankind, had he, instead of this soaring and chimerical scheme, used his reputation and abilities in extending his influence over the party to which circumstances had attached him, and to which, in fact, his principles much more closely allied him. For how could he imagine, that the accession of Lords Grenville and Grey, who declaimed without ceasing against the war in the peninsula, would conduce to the prosecution of that contest with augmented vigour? He would soon have found, that this, his favourite project, would proceed much more languidly under the new coalition, which was partly hostile to it, than under one which adopted it steadily, though not with all the ardour which he desired.

The answer of Lords Grenville and Grey shewed a spirit of conciliation, combined with extreme care not to commit themselves on the points proposed to them. They enlarged on the subject of Catholic concession, which formed the only tie between them and Lord Wellesley. But on the subject of operations in the peninsula, they indicated, not obscurely, their determination to adhere to that line of policy which they had

so often recommended. Lord Wellesley however was satisfied ; and the cause of failure arose in a different quarter. This requires that we should revert to a circumstance, not formerly noticed. Almost immediately after the close of the negociation with Lord Liverpool, a paper was circulated in the name of Marquis Wellesley, and believed to have the sanction of his authority. In this document, there appeared a full statement of the motives which had induced him to retire from office. It contained very heavy complaints as to the treatment he had received from Mr. Perceval, and expressed a decided opinion of the incapacity of that minister for the station which he had held. A judgment nearly similar was pronounced upon all the other members of the cabinet. So deeply was this attack upon themselves and their deceased colleague resented by ministers, that they expressed their determination not again to be members of the same cabinet with its author. It certainly seems to us, that Lord Wellesley committed here a capital error : he afterwards indeed declared in the House of Lords, that this paper was published without his knowledge, and that he was shocked by its appearance. The correctness of this assertion we should be sorry to doubt, though the public in general seem to have been rather sceptical.

But he certainly, in that case, ought not to have lost a moment in publicly disavowing it. Considering his silence, and that the sentiments contained in the paper were evidently those which he entertained, ministers undoubtedly had good reason to suppose, that it was sanctioned by his authority. Yet, in admitting that they had cause of resentment, we do not mean to approve of their conduct. We consider them by no means justified in being induced, at such a crisis, by any personal motive, to exclude from the public service the great power of Lord Wellesley. The document having appeared in a floating and unofficial form, might conveniently have been passed over in silence. We do not, indeed, lament, that the coalition ministry was thus frustrated, because we entertained no sanguine hopes from it. But this was not the ground on which ministers acted; they merely followed the impulse of private resentment, which, though natural and even just, ought not to have interfered in an arrangement which had the public welfare for its object.

Ministers having thus refused to accede to the coalition, Lord Wellesley had no means left of forming a ministry but by an entire coalition with the opposite party. It was impossible to shut his eyes to the consequence. His own small

band would soon have been lost in the numbers and influence of those with whom it was to be united ; and he would have been reduced to a situation more humiliating than ever. He could have held office only by acting a secondary part, and by lending himself to the measures most hateful to him, the desertion of our allies, and the suspension of all vigorous military operations. His mind was too honourable and manly ever to contemplate such an issue. He hesitated not to make the mortifying declaration, that his undertaking had entirely failed ; and to resign into the hands of his Royal Highness the trust which had been committed to him.

The nation was now seized with extreme disgust and impatience at the continued state of anarchy in which it was plunged. Invectives were uttered against public men who, from personal motives and enmities, withdrew themselves from the service of their country at such a crisis. Hints were even thrown out, that the Prince himself, and his secret advisers, were throwing every possible obstacle in the way of the desired result. No evidence of this has, however, been adduced ; nor does there appear to have been any limitation of the powers with which successive negotiators were entrusted. A clamour, however, arose for a ministry of whatever nature ; and the

coalition having failed, it seemed now evident that opposition must come in. The Prince, nevertheless, still declined a direct application to the leaders of that body. The commission to form a new ministry was entrusted to Lord Moira, a personal friend of his own, and who, of all the statesmen usually ranked with the opposition, was attached to it by the loosest ties. This nobleman was well known to the public, was distinguished by his popular talents, and had shone both in the senate and in the field. He was reproached only with a too eager pursuit of popularity among men of all classes, which in this divided country must always be futile, and can scarcely escape the reproach of too great versatility. He had thus, particularly among his own party, incurred the charge of unsteadiness of principle, and immoderate vanity. The choice of him, therefore, did not probably mitigate the disgust naturally felt by Lords Grenville and Grey, at seeing how studiously the Prince avoided any direct application to themselves. However, they proceeded to the negociation with all due decorum; and it seemed proceeding rapidly to a prosperous issue, when a single difference of opinion, upon a subordinate point, arrested its progress. Lord Grenville enquired, if the officers of the household were to be removed? to which Lord Moira replied, that, in his decided

opinion, they ought not. This difference proved irreconcilable ; and the negotiation broke up.

Lord Moira has been much and grievously censured upon this occasion. We confess, however, we see little ground for this blame, unless the principle, of which he made himself the champion, can be proved to be pernicious, and a violation of the constitution. If otherwise, it seemed natural, before delivering his Royal Highness into the hands of a party unavoidably exasperated against him, to make some provision for his personal comfort. There is no doubt, that the practice has been to change these persons with a change of ministry. Yet it does not quite appear to us, how the constitution can be interested in depriving the Sovereign of the nomination of men who take no ostensible share in the public councils ; who are not responsible for any public measure ; but who merely swell the pomp of his retinue, and are the companions of his private life. A ministry seems to go too far in prescribing to the sovereign the companions of his social hours, even though there should be good reasons for wishing them changed. We do not see, therefore, the constitutional necessity of this removal ; we are doubtful, moreover, as to the policy of it, with a view to the preservation of the party in power. The Prince certainly was greatly attached to these

persons ; perhaps too much so ; into that question we do not enter. It appears also, that their influence with him was likely to be employed in a manner unfavourable to the new administration. But was there any reason to expect, that their removal from office would remove them also from the good graces of his Royal Highness? It could only serve to increase their zeal to overthrow the men who had expelled them, and thereby render their seat in power more than ever insecure. Would it not have been wiser then by suffering them to continue, to mitigate, if possible, or extinguish an hostility, which could not cease to be formidable?

Lord Moira adhered to his judgment, and finding the two other noble Lords equally immoveable, considered his commission as frustrated. He imitated, therefore, the conduct of Lord Wellesley, by resigning it into the hands of his Royal Highness. He is said also to have advised the resolution, which certainly was formed, of having recourse again to the ministry whose incapacity had been solemnly pronounced by the House of Commons. Parliament was, therefore, informed, that the Prince having in vain endeavoured to frame another and a better ministry, there remained no alternative but to rest satisfied with that which they already possessed. A vote, to

which the House of Commons soon after came, exhibited on the side of ministers the large majority of 289 against 164. In producing so remarkable a change, something is due, no doubt, to the uneasiness amounting almost to alarm, felt at seeing the country continue, for an indefinite period, in a state of anarchy. But it may also be considered as testifying the sense of the house, with regard to the frivolity of the grounds on which the noble Lords had refused to accept of office. This was, in fact, the sentiment of Mr. Wortley himself, who had proposed the motion of condemnation. That vote, therefore, and the abortive proceedings held upon it, gave ministers an established seat in power, which they could never otherwise have attained. The nation were averse to behold such scenes repeated; and willingly consented to make trial of what the old ministry could do, even deprived of Mr. Perceval. They have not, as yet, had any cause to repent this resolution. The present ministers are not men of shining abilities; but they are plain practical men, diligently doing what they apply themselves to; and, we really believe, sincerely seeking, to their best judgment, the public welfare. It fortunately happens, that the conduct of the war, which is now the most critical and difficult department of public measures, is formed completely into a system, in which it would

scarcely be possible to innovate. The theatre of it will, of course, be confined to the peninsula; and there the Marquis of Wellington has attained such a pre-eminence of character and fame, that it can never be in contemplation to adopt any plan, but that which he may dictate. Diligence and activity are, therefore, all that is required, and of these qualities there is no deficiency. Our only apprehension would be, in the case of some crisis arising where no precedent could be found; and where plans entirely new were to be originated. We should dread the absence of those bold and commanding powers which would be requisite to meet such an emergency.

Although ministers have maintained their ground, and do not seem in any immediate danger, yet their parliamentary weakness has obliged them to relax in some particulars which had formed very prominent parts of their system. They have ceased, as a body, to oppose the catholic claims, which the nation was strongly inclined to recognize; and they have been compelled to rescind their orders in council, which experience had rendered generally odious. These concessions were very reluctantly accepted by their adversaries, who were thereby deprived of strong holds which they had against them on the public opinion. It was exclaimed, that principle was

sacrificed for the sake of place ; and that ministers were ready to surrender every thing, except their offices. For ourselves, we are much less anxious to enquire, whether certain individuals act a consistent part, than whether public measures are likely to be good. A degree of weakness which compels a ministry to relinquish all the decidedly unpopular parts of their system, appears to us very salutary to the nation. One, on the contrary, which is always sure of a majority, is both dangerous to liberty, and extremely apt to go wrong. This state of things, too, bids fair to strike a blow at that arrangement by which the legislature, as well as the executive power, is vested in the minister. Parliament, instead of indiscriminately sanctioning every bill which he introduces, and rejecting every one which he opposes, may gradually learn to judge for itself, and to assert its own independence.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WE begin with the consideration of foreign policy and foreign affairs ; because, unfortunately, these are by far the most important objects which the political world now presents. In happier and more tranquil periods, our views would naturally rest, in the first instance, upon our native country. The improvement of its administration, of its resources, and of all that contributes to the public welfare, would then form the most interesting topic. But amid this reign of violence and suffering, under which civilized mankind has so long groaned, a fatal necessity turns our views to other nations. It is in them that our sympathy is arrested by the mighty revolutions which are changing the aspect and fortunes of the human race ; it is upon the scenes there acting, that our own present welfare and ultimate security chiefly depend. The principles, therefore, upon which our conduct ought to be guided in this department,

form the most important question that can now come under consideration.

The grand point upon which our foreign relations at this moment hinge, appears to be simply this: Whether this country ought to insulate itself entirely from the rest of Europe, and reserve all its resources for the sole object of repelling foreign invasion; or whether it ought not, with its utmost means, to afford aid to those nations who maintain a hard struggle for independence against the same common enemy? These opposite lines of conduct may be considered in a double view, as to morality, and as to policy.

That justice should be maintained between nation and nation, in the same manner as between man and man, is a proposition, the converse of which may now be considered as exploded. But it is not so fully admitted, that nations are bound to cultivate between each other the relations of benevolence. It has even been treated as chimerical to suppose, that the councils of any one people should be guided by other views than those of its own particular interest. After the most deliberate consideration, however, we are quite unable to perceive any distinction between the two cases. A neighbour, in the christian and philanthropic eye, is merely another individual

endowed with the same common nature; nations are merely aggregates of such individuals. One nation, therefore, appears to us bound to sacrifice some portion of its comforts, in order to produce a much greater good to another nation, in the very same manner as an individual is bound to perform the like office to his suffering neighbour. Until we see some solid argument to the contrary, we shall not be deterred by the epithet *romantic*, which may be applied to this opinion. All virtue is termed romantic by those who are strangers to it. We insist, on the contrary, that the obligation of mutual aid, is more incumbent and more wanted in the case of nations, than in that of individuals. In the interior of a well constituted society, the laws are powerful to prevent any essential injury being done by one man to another. But when a mighty potentate oppresses his weaker neighbours, there exists no legal remedy. There is no tribunal on earth to judge the masters of mankind. Unless, therefore, a remedy be found, by nations affording to each other spontaneous aid, injustice and usurpation must reign uncontrouled.

We have endeavoured to found the above obligation purely on the principle of mutual duty; and this, we apprehend, should be a sufficient motive. We do not apprehend, however, any danger of their suffering by this generosity. The

observance of moral obligation is, in its grand and ultimate effects, uniformly productive of good. In individual and partial cases, however, it often happens, that this great law has not time to operate; he who has committed the evil escapes; and the consequences fall upon the undeserving. But wherever great masses of men are concerned, and extensive and permanent interests are to be provided for, virtue leads directly to its natural result. A state, in defending its neighbours against oppression, soon finds that it has provided for its own security. A principle by which the weak are systematically defended against the usurpations of the strong, forms the surest guard against the undue and dangerous aggrandizement of any particular potentate. Its steady application leads to the formation of the balancing system, which we certainly number among the most valuable improvements of modern policy. It is vain to assert, that the balance of power once formed in Europe is entirely broken up, and can never be re-established. The policy which prescribes, that a number of smaller states should unite in order to form a counterpoise against one that is too great, is essentially founded in the nature of things. No neglect or oblivion of it can make its obligation cease. Still, at this moment, amid such an unprecedented preponderance of a single

power,* it affords to suffering Europe the only hope of final deliverance.

In laying down these principles, we are far from wishing to recommend their indiscriminate application. There are certainly exceptions; and such, unhappily, were those presented by Europe during a long succession of years. A series of attacks were made with unequal strength upon a power which contained within itself a source of preternatural energy. The consequence was only that of securing to it a great and ever increasing preponderance, which ended by the nearest approach to universal dominion, with which Europe was ever menaced. Yet here we must observe, that the revolutionary impulse which gave such great power to modern France, was a circumstance altogether of a temporary and peculiar nature. By mixing and combining with the other elements, it obscured and suspended, without finally subverting them. Even in spite of this disturbing principle, it was only by losing sight entirely of the balancing system, that Europe was involved in such an abyss. Had Prussia and Austria remained true to each other, and had the smaller powers rallied round them, a defensive

* Written previously to some recent events.

war might still have been maintained, and France confined nearly within her original boundaries. When Prussia left the common cause, it certainly became prudent for Austria to maintain peace if possible, even at the expense of some mortifications. All the anti-revolutionary wars waged by her, ended in confirming and extending the power France. At length her neck was finally placed beneath the yoke, and she was forced to undergo the last of humiliations, an alliance with the enemy of her throne and her house.

We are sorry to observe, that in these memorable changes, the part acted by Britain was not always salutary or judicious. Pitt, in the application of the most enlightened general principles, did not always discern sufficiently the temporary circumstances by which they were modified. He was led astray by habits of too sanguine calculation. He employed the finances and resources of Britain in stimulating Austria to war, after the period was past when there could be a reasonable hope of its proving otherwise than disastrous.— Yet it must be noticed in extenuation, that to predict, before they have taken place, the changing aspects of a national revolution, demands habits of philosophical calculation, which can scarcely be expected from a practical statesman. From the fatal moment of the peace of Presburg,

however, the scene totally changed. It became, thenceforth, impossible, that any power should make war upon France voluntarily. Whatever contest arose in Europe, must undoubtedly be one of Napoleon's raising. Every effort, therefore, which it was in the power of Britain to make, could be attended with no injury, but inevitably with some advantage. If it did not insure the success of the powers attacked, it at least broke their fall; it retarded that progress which it could not stop. Unfortunately, at this very time, the British cabinet first formed the design of withdrawing itself from all continental interests, and merely maintaining a defensive war at home.— This system was persevered in during the continuance in power of the party by whom it was formed; and the fall of Prussia, and the overthrow of Russia, were viewed without a single effort to avert them. A change of ministers, indeed, introduced a system diametrically opposite; yet the votaries of continental inaction still maintained the soundness of their principles, and predicted national ruin as the consequence of their having been departed from. It seems necessary, therefore, briefly to consider the arguments on which they rest.

The first is derived from the astonishing successes of the French arms; and the almost entire

failure of every attempt hitherto made to resist them. But was it certain, because France had prevailed in a few successive instances, that her triumphs were never to be interrupted? Was there not, on the contrary, some likelihood that, as the progress of conquest led her into less hospitable regions, into tracts less fitted for the supply and movement of armies, obstacles hitherto unknown might impede her advance? The talents of her commanders were great; but had they not a tendency, through emulation and example, to raise up rival talents? The entire subjugation of Europe has proved, in fact, to be an object of very different magnitude from what this party were disposed to represent it. But let us suppose the probability really to be as they conceive, that continental Europe must, at length, bend her neck beneath the yoke. Still we repeat it, by vigorous efforts on our part, obstacles are opposed to every particular step; time is gained. Not only do we secure the chance, whatever it may be, of preventing altogether this catastrophe: not only do we leave scope for those thousand accidents to which human affairs are liable, but we certainly gain an interval of security before the dreadful peril arrives. Without being prone to despair, we certainly conceive that, were the whole continent subdued, the situation of Britain would become indeed awful and critical.

This view of the subject however affords to our adversaries another argument. Having established as a fixed principle, that affairs must in no long period, arrive at the crisis above alluded to, they insist, that she ought to husband all her strength, and reserve it entire for the domestic struggle. Now we must first observe, that the husbanding would be very small. Whether men are sent to the continent or not, the very same number must still be supported for the purposes of military and naval defence. The question therefore amounts to little more than whether they shall be maintained upon one spot or another. We must spend thirty or forty millions upon the war: for the sake therefore of avoiding a million or two more, to forego the chance of great good, and even of finally saving the whole, scarcely seems a very rational conduct. There is besides another view of the matter, which well deserves to be considered. It is only by the experience of real warfare, that those qualities can be produced, on which its success depends. Without this, officers cannot be formed or distinguished; and all the departments, on which the supply and efficiency of an army depend, sink into neglect. Hence a nation which remains inactive, while all her neighbours are buried in hostility, comes to the field at last with very unequal strength. This was fatally proved by Prussia, after she had

for a series of years adhered to the system prescribed by our modern statesmen. She did not waste her blood in foreign quarrels; she kept her troops at home; she husbanded her strength; and according to them, she ought to have been fully prepared for the crisis when it came. Need we say more. The crisis arrived; and Prussia was found without experience, without generals, without resource. She fell at one blow, never to rise. Austria on the contrary, which had long maintained the unequal struggle, remained, after successive disasters, still powerful; and even in her last humiliation, was treated as an ally, rather than a vassal. What an accession of strength has the British army received during its campaigns in the peninsula? What an improvement in all the departments? How many distinguished officers risen into notice! What a mass of veteran troops! Who would now entertain any doubt as to the issue, even of the hardest contest. We go not indeed so far as to say, that a nation ought to engage in warfare, for the mere purpose of exercising and improving its troops. But there appears to us to be here a punishment provided for that ungenerous apathy, which should lead it to concentrate all its views within itself, and to suffer injustice and usurpation to prevail around it, without any effort to arrest their progress.

CHAPTER IV.

BUONAPARTE AND THE FRENCH EMPIRE.

NEVER perhaps did there exist an individual, who exercised so mighty and terrible an influence on the fate of civilized mankind, as the very extraordinary person of whom we are now to treat: If there are subjects which it is difficult to render interesting, because they are unknown and little attended to, the difficulty here, from a cause directly opposite, is not less serious. This subject has been handled so constantly in every company and in every newspaper, so debased by the ignoble mouths through which it has passed, as to render it scarcely possible to say any thing, which every one is not long ago tired of hearing. Yet, after all, the language hitherto held has been mingled with such a torrent of national and party zeal, that the wise man may perhaps find reason to adopt a strain somewhat different from that in which the generality of persons are accustomed to indulge.

Bred to arms, and having founded all his greatness upon military fame, it is as a commander that this personage first merits to be considered. In this character it seems universally allowed, that he must rank at least as the equal of the greatest names in history. We have been informed, and partly believe, that in the mere tactical part of the service, he does not very peculiarly excel, and is even surpassed by some others of the French generals. But in all that regards the policy of war; in choosing the most vital points of attack; in directing his concentrated force against the separated bodies of the enemy; in following up every success with overwhelming rapidity; in these operations, he does appear to have almost created a new era in the military art. There is in his movements a boldness and depth of genius, which confounds all calculation, and eludes the penetration even of the most sagacious enemy. The first campaign in Italy is still perhaps his master-piece, and the one of which the success was achieved with the most inadequate means. It forms a complete school of military policy, and were it narrated with intelligence, which it has never yet been, would afford instruction, beyond perhaps any other, in the higher parts of the art of war. It is remarkable that though, in his military character, there is extreme boldness, and enterprize

bordering on desperation, yet there is little heroism. It is the daring of genius, rather than of valour. Success, more than glory is the aim. We speak not this in absolute condemnation. A prudent attention to personal safety in him who directs the movements of a great army, may fairly be considered as commendable; and the achievements of chivalrous valour are often very little conducive to the greatness of states. We only observe that this circumstance tends to cool the admiration and personal interest, which enterprises of such stupendous magnitude are naturally calculated to excite.

In regard to the moral qualities of this favourite of fortune, we do not mean to join in that indiscriminate invective, which this nation delights to indulge; yet it seems difficult to discover any theme whatever of praise. There seems no virtue, even of private life, which he habitually practises; and it were not surely rash to affirm, that there exists scarcely a crime which, to gratify his ruling passion, he would hesitate to commit. Having granted thus far, we do not know whether he is loaded with much wanton guilt, or delinquencies committed out of pure malignity. The Syrian atrocities, if not utterly discredited, seem, at least, greatly involved in doubt. His domestic administration affords no room for

panegyric. He has erected his own despotic power upon the entire subversion of the rights of his people: he has not hesitated, in the pursuit of chimerical projects, to impose upon them hardships and privations of a description almost unprecedented. Yet his guilt has not been of the same dye with that of the *Marats* and *Robespierres*, the horror of mankind, who deformed the early ages of the French revolution. His government has not been a government of blood. Finding the nation indeed bent to the yoke, he was exempted from the motive, or necessity, which urged those sanguinary monsters to these deeds. There may be room for the suspicion, that had similar circumstances prompted to the same dreadful precautions, he would not have refrained. Yet it were going too far, upon such a presumption, to account him guilty of crimes which he never committed. Upon the whole, he appears to exhibit very nearly the general character of a conqueror and usurper to whom nothing, almost, that opposes his ambitious projects; has ever been sacred. There was not perhaps, from the general laws of human nature, reason to hope that any one of a different character should have risen, through such convulsions, to the station which he now occupies.

Ambition is the ruling passion of monarchs;

and there are few endowed with any activity of mind, who have been exempted from its sway. But hereditary sovereigns have an established seat, on which they can rest with satisfaction; their sallies of ambition alternate with the love of pleasure and repose. The condition of one who has risen from a humble rank to the imperial sceptre, might seem to afford, more than any other, ample ground of contentment. Yet so it is not; in him, who has risen beyond all expectation, the habit of aiming at something higher continues, at the highest point to which he can reach. After so rapid a progress, to remain stationary at whatever elevation, becomes a humiliation. This general tendency of human nature is strengthened in the French emperor, by a peculiar eagerness and restlessness of character. His mind never seems to repose a moment from gigantic schemes of aggrandizement. Every acquisition is regarded only as a step to something farther: in the means, too, by which these daring projects are accomplished, there is an entire disregard of those principles of the law of nations, and even of common good faith, which had formerly been established, to a great extent, in the intercourse between European states. There is, in the proceedings of this mighty adventurer, something unlicensed, something Asiatic, to which Europe is not

accustomed. The French revolution indeed, in sweeping away the ancient aristocracy, banished along with it all remains of that chivalric honour, of which it had been the depositary. The present general aspect of the French empire, both in its external and internal relations, appears to us very strongly to partake of the character of an eastern despotism.

Buonaparte has exhibited himself, even to an ostentatious degree, as the patron of science and art. He is not a man of letters, and may probably be chiefly actuated by a regard to his present credit and future fame. Be the motive what it may, nor ought it to be too severely scrutinized, the conduct is laudable. Yet does there seem to be something peculiarly ungenial in this protection; since we know not of a single great man who has risen under its influence. All those, who at present throw lustre on the reign of Napoleon, were formed and celebrated before its commencement. It is a consequence of the form of government which he has established; that the only sciences successfully cultivated, are the physical and mathematical. The higher branches of moral and political philosophy, which could flourish only under the influence of a free discussion no longer tolerated, have become entirely extinct.

CHAP. V.

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE PENINSULA.

NO event, since the French revolution, has produced on the condition of Europe consequences so mighty, as this other revolution, originating in causes far different. Enthusiastic loyalty combined there with a tempered passion for liberty, to render this cause the most glorious in which it was possible that the sword could be drawn. The first efforts to which this glowing sentiment prompted, were entirely worthy of itself. From one extremity to the other, the indignant nation rose at once; and an unarmed peasantry put to flight those legions, which had vanquished the veteran armies of Europe. From a quarter so unexpected it was, that Napoleon witnessed the first grand reverse of his arms. Since that time, the lustre of Spanish glory has been greatly dimmed: yet still, in the success of this cause are involved, not only the principles of unalterable justice, but all the highest

interests of the human race. Through Spain light first dawned on that night of despotism, which was rapidly enveloping Europe. With this success is also connected the establishment in a great and once enslaved kingdom, of a free constitution, formed nearly after the most perfect model existing. It is also to be a main instrument in organizing a balance of power, which may save the world from that universal subjection, with which it was menaced.

The Spanish people have suffered in the estimation of mankind, by the too splendid expectations which their first heroism excited. A romantic interest was kindled, which no longer allowed their conduct to be tried by any sober or ordinary standard. It was not duly considered, that the wants under which they laboured;—the want of experienced counsellors, of skilful generals, of veteran armies,—were such as the best dispositions could not soon supply. It was even imagined, upon very false and flimsy grounds, that the mere absence of a monarch would ensure to them a great superiority over other European nations. This circumstance produced indeed the advantage, that there was no one to sign a disgraceful treaty, and successively to surrender his provinces. But with regard to vigorous and efficient mea-

asures for repelling the foe, these, we are convinced, would have been promoted by the presence, even of the weakest monarch. His authority would have given that union of effort, and have commanded that universal obedience, the want of which has been the undoing of Spain. It has been observed often and truly, that a despotism succeeding to a free government, is the most powerful of all administrations. We may now observe in return, that a free government immediately succeeding a despotism, is the weakest. The oppressive and deadening influence of the preceding government, has prevented the rise of any great talents, or any experience in public affairs. They cannot be created at once, even under more favourable circumstances. The first effect therefore of the change is, to remove that unity of counsel and action, which forms the main advantage of an absolute, or monarchical government. Such was the condition of Spain; and he who duly considers this, will cease to wonder at that imbecility which formed the uniform character of successive administrations. He will then, amid many errors and much apathy, perceive an admirable constancy, which has always risen under the pressure of adverse fortune, and which, through a long series of overwhelming disasters, still preserved Spain unconquered. He will observe,

that the provinces which have for the longest period been occupied and covered by the French armies, are those in which the spirit of resistance is still most alive, and in which the mightiest force is arrayed against the enemy. He will hope, even after repeated disappointments, that a government and a system will at length be organized, which may secure the triumph of a cause, worthy of a better fortune than has hitherto attended it.

Notwithstanding the length of the contest, Spain has never been able to form a powerful or efficient regular army. Yet had the troops raised at its commencement been still on foot, they must by this time have been veterans. But unfortunately, either through the imprudence of commanders, or the pressure of circumstances, they have been committed against the enemy before they were in any condition to make head; they have been routed, dispersed, captured; and the army levied to succeed them formed a mere assemblage of undisciplined recruits: while however the regular armies in vain attempted to save their country, their place was supplied by a force of a new and anomalous character. Amid the corruption of the higher orders, the peasantry retained still their national honour, bravery, and love of adventure. Indignant to see their fields

the prey of a treacherous invader, they every where rose; they snatched such arms as chance supplied, and chose such leaders as the exigency of the moment presented. Every mountain, every forest soon contained its *guerilla*, skilled in all the arts of stratagem and surprise. Then began a terrible scene of destruction; the enemy fell as it were by invisible hands; their ranks were thinned without effort, and without glory. This was indeed a terrible warfare for Spain: instead of affording protection, it only increased her desolation. She was laid waste alike by friends and foes: yet though the present evil was great, a hope was thus laid of future deliverance. The enemy's strength was undermined; these detached bands swelled gradually into armies; continually in action, they acquired all the essential properties of soldiers. It is thus only that a nation, which has no army, can resist a foreign aggression. Such were the bands which Wallace led to victory, and with which, in ancient time, he drove the invader beyond the Scottish confines.

The guerilla warfare had not yet reached so happy a crisis. It still maintained a hard and unfruitful contest against the mighty legions, which powered continually over the Pyrenees. The commencement of organized resistance arose

from a different quarter, whence it was least expected. The Portuguese nation had forfeited all the glory, with which the achievements of a former age had invested them. The national character of this people had been represented as base and degraded, beyond that of any other nation in Europe. These representations were not strictly correct; they were drawn almost exclusively from the population of the capital and sea-ports. They were eagerly laid hold of however by those whose province it was to ridicule the policy of seeking co-operation from such an ally. Lord Wellington however, a sound and able judge, soon discerned, that the Portuguese were capable of being converted into good troops. At his suggestion, 30,000 of that nation were taken into British pay, and subjected to British discipline. And here it is impossible to deny, that a circumstance, hastily thought the most unfavourable, was that which laid the foundation of success. We allude to the form of government which secured subordination and obedience; while the spring which it wanted was supplied by British intelligence and activity. It happened fortunately and wisely, that the force thus created was placed at the disposition of one of the first commanders of modern Europe. In this age of war, Wellington next to Buonaparte, makes the greatest figure on the theatre

of the world. As we have said something upon the character of the one, it may be proper now to do the same with regard to the other.

Lord Wellington had earned great glory previously to his Spanish campaign. He was known then as a bold and enterprising leader, a character somewhat rare among British Generals, who have commonly been brave in action, but timid in counsel. This course was ill suited to the matchless bravery of the troops which they commanded : it tended to keep down the military fame of Britain much below its natural standard. Lord Wellington knew the valour of his troops, and gave it scope ; a series of splendid victories was the consequence. Yet when circumstances prescribed a cautious and protracted warfare, he established a new fame, eclipsing that which he had formerly acquired. Faction had raised up violent and inveterate adversaries, who undervalued all his great actions. He lived to silence these murmurs ; to extort panegyrics from his bitterest enemies ; and to receive from an united people the tribute of admiration.

Of this extraordinary character, the basis appears to us to be a perfectly sound judgment, combined with indefatigable application, and a perfect knowledge of all the means and resources

of war. Promptitude and presence of mind, in the highest degree, place all these qualifications constantly at command. His dispatches also exhibit habits of accurate and laborious calculation, which render him prepared for any emergency, and make it almost impossible that he should be taken by surprise. These certainly form qualities sufficient to constitute a commander of the first order. We shall, perhaps, appear bold in saying, that, beyond these, we do not discern any remarkable degree of what may properly be called military genius. We see the able and judicious application of all the established resources of war; but not the discovery of new combinations; not any splendid display of intellect and invention.— If we are called to illustrate this observation by contrast, we can instance none more striking than that of his great rival. In almost all his grand operations, there is something unexpected, amazing, which confounds all calculation, which no common mind could have predicted. We allude, particularly, to the envelopement and capture of the army of Mack; the passage of the Danube at Entzerdorf; and to almost every step of his first Italian campaign. But among the many battles which Lord Wellington has gained, we scarcely recollect one in which victory was achieved by any grand manœuvre or stroke of genius. Salamanca itself may hereafter appear to be only a

doubtful exception. He commits not himself without a fair prospect of success ; he gives scope to the energies of British troops ; this is sufficient. Perhaps, indeed, from this very circumstance, he may form a safer commander for us than one addicted to these new and daring manœuvres.—The circumstances considered under which Britain wages war on the continent, with an army which could not easily be replaced, and with a hard struggle against superior numbers, it is, perhaps, eligible, to keep within secure and established limits. These bold strokes are like commercial experiments, always liable, more or less, to failure and great consequent loss.

Lord Wellington is well known to the British public, not only by his sword, but by his pen ; his dispatches forming the only authentic channel by which the operations of the British army are transmitted. They do not make the smallest aim or pretension to literary merit ; indeed they rather in this respect, exhibit a marked deficiency. Yet we confess, they please us by that absence of all ostentation, that close adherence to plain and practical business, which breathes so strongly in them. They contain nothing superfluous ; no rhetorical ornament ; no rhodomontade ; the plain fact is simply related, as if by an indifferent spectator. This style reminds us considerably of that

of Cæsar, though it has not attained to the classic elegance of that celebrated writer and warrior.— Both, for example, agree in often using one word repeatedly in the same sentence, disregarding the inelegance thereby caused ; and this, which would be a grievous fault in a writer by profession, appears rather a grace in the narrative of a man of business, who has great affairs to relate.

From the character of Lord Wellington, however, it is time to proceed to his exploits, which will afford the best illustration of it. The campaign in Portugal may probably be considered as the event by which the tide was first turned against France. Not only did it for the first time exhibit to Europe the spectacle of the French grand army in full retreat ; it taught also a lesson, not given in vain, how even a superior invading army may be finally baffled. The foundation of this plan consisted in forming, at one of the most retired points of the peninsula, an impregnable position ; upon which, when hard pressed, the army could retire. Lisbon, in this view, presented a favourable situation. That capital is enclosed within a peninsula, the isthmus of which, though broad, is defended by chains of steep and somewhat lofty mountains. A series of works had here formed an entrenchment so strong, that Massena, though enterprising even to rashness,

did not so much as attempt to storm it. He soon found that, by advancing to the capital, he had not made the most distant approach to the conquest of Portugal. He could not separate his troops, in order to occupy the country, because they would thus be exposed to attack from the united enemy. He could no longer even maintain the long line of communication, which connected him with the French frontier. The militia and peasantry, collecting behind him, harassed and cut off the parties sent out for the purpose of collecting forage and provisions. By the combined influence of these causes it was, that his force became no longer able to face that army, which its superior numbers had formerly compelled to retreat. To the weakness thus superinduced, rather than to the absolute want of provisions, we are inclined to attribute the precipitate retreat of this commander in the spring of 1811. Lord Wellington, having just received a reinforcement of 5000 men from Ireland, notices in his dispatch his intention of attacking the enemy, for the purpose of raising the siege of Badajos. It was probably on observing movements indicating this resolution, that Massena determined to save his army by timely withdrawing. He conducted his retreat ably, and without exposing his army to any material loss; but could not prevent the allies, who followed hard behind, from investing Al-

meida, the northern barrier of Portugal. So little provision, it appears, had been made for such a vicissitude, that this important place contained supplies for scarcely three weeks. Massena, however, on approaching the Spanish frontier, found his situation materially improved. All the garrisons of Castile and Asturias, with all the troops employed to keep the guerillas in check, though they could not be permanently withdrawn, could yet be collected for a temporary object.— He soon found himself at the head of an army superior to that opposed to him; and commenced a desperate attack on the lines which covered the siege of Almeida. The judgment, however, with which they were formed, and the gallantry with which they were defended, rendered this attempt fruitless to himself, and glorious to the British arms. He was now forced to remain an inactive spectator of the fall of this important fortress, though the garrison was saved by an act of skilful daring on the part of the governor.

On the southern frontier, the British arms were crowned with equal glory, though not with a result equally fortunate. A sad scene of Spanish misconduct and disaster had preceded. The Marquis de la Romana, the greatest man by far who had arisen during the present contest, possessed an army rendered, by his own cares, truly pow-

erful and efficient, and capable of co-operating with British troops. This illustrious nobleman, however, had very recently fallen a victim to fatigues endured in his country's cause; and the command devolved upon Mandizabal, who seems to have been totally unqualified for such a station. His first operation was to throw 3000 men into Olivenza, a place not supplied with any adequate means of defence. The troops, in consequence, were soon surrounded and captured. The French having then invested Badajos, the Spanish general, who remained posted on the other side of the Guadiana, suffered himself to be surprised, and his whole army nearly cut off. The remainder, shut up in Badajos, was surrendered by the governor, without standing an assault, to an army little superior in number to his own.—These dreadful losses deprived the Anglo-Portuguese army of all Spanish co-operation, and also of a fortress which formed an important basis to their future operations. The determination was formed to recover it, if possible. The difficulties of the enterprise were considerable. From the situation of Badajos on the opposite side of the Guadiana, an army from Portugal besieging it were liable to have their retreat cut off. The danger was much greater, when the floods had carried away all the bridges, and it was absolutely necessary to wait till they could be repaired.

This delay enabled Soult to collect all the force within his reach, and to advance upon the allies. They repulsed him completely, in the glorious, though sanguinary victory, at Albuera. But the siege had been suspended, and was to be begun anew. Lord Wellington pushed it vigorously; but the active resistance of the governor enabled the enemy to organize a new plan of operations. Soult in the south, and Marmont in the north, having collected their whole disposeable force, formed a junction on the banks of the Guadiana, and advanced 60,000 strong upon Badajos.— Lord Wellington then judged it prudent to abandon his enterprise, and to retire within the Portuguese frontier. The great efforts expended upon this place, had thus served only as a diversion in favour of the Spaniards, and particularly the guerilla, who, during this period, exhibited a remarkable augmentation. Perhaps, while the French force in Spain continued so great, this effect was as much as any effort of the combined armies could be expected to produce.

A similar attempt, made towards the close of the year, upon the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, was followed by a similar result. A blockade of three months had reduced the place to considerable extremity; but Marmont, by evacuating nearly the whole north of Spain, suc-

ceeded in collecting an army of 60,000 men, when Lord Wellington raised the siege.

After this hasty sketch of preliminary events, we arrive at the period to which this survey peculiarly relates. Lord Wellington was now aware of the great diversion which the arms of France were about to experience in the north of Europe. Considerable detachments had already begun to withdraw from the peninsula. This change of affairs dictated a vigorous offensive system, at once to favour the exertions of our northern allies, and to improve the respite thus granted to Spain. Before however entering into the details of the eventful campaign which followed, it may be proper to take a view of what was passing in the eastern part of the peninsula.

The frontier provinces of Arragon and Catalonia had, from the beginning, been the grand theatre of Spanish glory. Their heroic resistance had not only thrown lustre on the Spanish name, but rendered them immortal in the annals of mankind. Saragossa, without walls, and without troops, had repulsed the attack of veteran armies; while Gerona, which ranked only as a fortress of the second order, withstood for a year every effort to subdue it. Buonaparte determined to strain every nerve in order to quell this

desperate and growing resistance. After having tried in vain several of his most illustrious commanders, he at length found one well fitted to accomplish his object. Suchet, by the total defeat of Blake near Saragossa, founded a reputation which was increased by every subsequent achievement. His military character seems to bear great resemblance to that of his master. Bold and decisive, profound in planning, rapid in acting, following up every success without a moment's delay, he never allowed his adversaries to breathe. And when, after victory, terror was to be inspired, and every call of mercy to be disregarded, the tyrant then found, in Suchet, an instrument prompt to execute his most sanguinary mandates. Means of resistance truly formidable had been organized. Lerida had been strengthened, Tortosa and Tarragona, which at the beginning of the contest were open towns, had been converted into fortresses. The Spaniards, in whatever else they had failed, had always shewn a characteristic obstinacy in this species of defence. Now, therefore, a terrible struggle began, every resource was exhausted, both of attack and defence. Supported by unfailing means, the unrighteous cause always triumphed, yet every fortress subdued cost a new army to France. At length her forces reached the last bulwark of Catalonia; Tarragona alone remained unsubdued. As this

termination of the contest drew near, desperation rose on both sides to the highest pitch. Suchet, seeing that he could succeed only by unprecedented celerity, lavished the blood of his troops, carried post after post by storm, and sought, by extraordinary efforts, to anticipate the succours which were preparing from every quarter of Spain. Irritated by the resistance which he encountered, and the immense losses of his army, he announced the dreadful resolution of laying Tarragona in ashes. Unhappily the opportunity was given of fulfilling this fatal threat. The advantages afforded to the place by its maritime position, were not duly employed, either for reinforcing the garrison, or for withdrawing it. All the exterior works being carried, and a breach effected, the French army proceeded to a general assault. They entered, and the troops which had defended the place so gallantly, struck with sudden panic, fled, and suffered themselves to be slaughtered without resistance. The direful threat was then fulfilled; fire and sword were let loose, and this ancient and renowned city presented in a few hours only a pile of smoking ruins.

This dismal catastrophe produced at first the effect intended. The Catalonians, struck with terror, and seeing this last bulwark fallen, re-

garded their country as lost. The army broke up, and either returned to their homes, or repaired to other provinces, where there seemed still a patriot standard to rally round. Suchet improved his success by marching direct to Montserrat, where the patriots had thrown up strong entrenchments, and had established a species of *depôt*. The place was carried by storm; and the subjection of Catalonia seemed complete. It was but a semblance however; for scarcely did the shortest interval elapse, when the flame burst forth anew, more bright than ever. The proclamations of Lacy and d'Eroles, two generals of merit, were eagerly obeyed, and in a few weeks twenty thousand men were in arms. The Pyrenean frontier still contained fastnesses; upon which the army could rest its operations, and the occupation of the islands of Las Medas, on the eastern part of the coast, afforded them an impregnable position, and a ready channel of communication with the British navy. From this moment the patriot force in Catalonia continued to present an aspect as formidable, as at any preceding period of the war.

This revival of patriot energies was doubtless greatly favoured by the circumstance, that Suchet was now intent upon another object. Valencia was the only great city in this part of the penin-

sula, which remained unsubdued. This province had not failed to contribute to the general cause; yet it had not shone very conspicuously; and a narrow provincial spirit, which directed its efforts, greatly impaired the benefit which might have been derived from them. Still to prevent its fall became the general interest of Spain; and Blake, who then united the characters of Regent and Generalissimo, repaired thither with an army from Cadiz. This force consisted of about 8,000 men, the best disciplined which Spain possessed; when united with the armies of Valencia and Arragon, it formed an amount exceeding 20,000 men. The castle of Murviedro, built on the renowned site of the ancient Saguntum, served as a rampart to the capital, and the reduction of this place was a necessary preliminary to any attack upon the city. Its defence was vigorous; and Blake had time to collect all his force, and give battle in its defence. He was totally defeated however with the loss of several thousand in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The Spaniards have not usually been successful in pitched battles, and we have scarcely the means of forming a criticism upon the conduct of the present action. It appears however, even upon Blake's own statement, that the army advanced in three columns, which did not communicate with each other, and that the main

attack was made by the least disciplined part of the troops. He seems aware of the disadvantage arising from these circumstances; but endeavours to excuse them, not we think very satisfactorily, by the nature of the ground in which they were to act. The fall of Saguntum speedily followed the loss of this battle; and Suchet then pressed forward with his whole army to the banks of the Guadalaviar. This river, of considerable magnitude, formed now the only remaining barrier of Valencia. The Spaniards had formed along its opposite side a series of entrenched camps, which rendered it necessary for Suchet to await the arrival of artillery, before he attempted the passage. A river however forms, in general, a line of defence too extensive to be long maintained against an active and enterprising enemy. The attempt even is dangerous; for as the army which defends the passage must spread itself along the whole of this line, it will necessarily be weak at each particular point. Blake, with the force from Cadiz, occupied Valencia, while Mahi, with the troops levied in the province and in Arragon, extended from Quarte upwards along the river. Suchet saw all the advantages that might be derived from this position of the Spanish army. He determined to attack at the point of junction between these two divisions. To this point, by a rapid and unex-

pected movement, he collected nearly the whole of his force; he crossed the river, stormed the entrenched camp, entirely separated Mahi from Valencia, and from the army of Blake, and pursued him beyond the Xucar. Then, wheeling round, he cut off the retreat of Blake, and forced him to take refuge within the walls of Valencia, which was immediately invested.

It was certainly an act of extreme imprudence in Blake thus to expose himself, with the flower of the Spanish armies, to be shut up in a place incapable of a regular defence. But after bringing his country to such an extremity, it might have been expected that some great, some extraordinary effort would be made to extricate her. The path was marked out by the immortal achievements of Palafox, in a situation far more desperate. Now it was that the poverty of Blake's genius fully appeared, and the reputation which he had acquired, it is difficult to say how, entirely vanished. His first measure consisted in an abortive effort to escape with his army. This attempt ought never to have been made, without the most promising hopes of success; since its necessary tendency was to inspire the utmost despondence. Yet, notwithstanding its dispiriting influence, the heroism of the inhabitants counteracted the weakness of their com-

mander, and forced him to reject the propositions of the French general. The aim of Suchet was now to inspire terror, both by pushing his approaches with desperate rapidity, and by commencing a furious bombardment upon the city. The courage of the inhabitants was shaken; and Blake, instead of seeking to revive it, availed himself of the momentary panic, to sign an ignominious capitulation, by which himself and his army were delivered up as prisoners of war.

We acquit Blake of treason. It does not seem possible, that a man who stood at the head of the Spanish government and army, could receive any price that might weigh in the balance with the loss of this high station, and of all his fame with his country and posterity. He seems to have possessed personal bravery, and a knowledge of military tactics. But no intellect, no invention, no capacity of acting in untried and critical situations. The mere circumstance of a train of disasters, too uniform to be the result of chance, might alone have deterred the Cortes from committing into his hands all the fortunes of the nation at so awful a crisis.

The campaign in Valencia, however calamitous, served yet as a diversion in favour of the allied army on the other side of the peninsula.

The motives have already been noticed, which induced Lord Wellington to determine upon commencing a series of offensive operations. These were doubtless much strengthened by the desire of relieving the present pressure upon the east of Spain. Early in January therefore, notwithstanding the obstacles which the season presented, the army crossed the Agueda, and invested Ciudad Rodrigo. The siege was pushed with extraordinary vigour. On the very first day, the British succeeded in storming an out-work which the French had raised, and which was expected to have protracted the siege for upwards of a week. In ten days more the lines were completed, and several breaches effected in the walls. The advances were not carried quite so far as is usual before an attack; but, on considering all circumstances, Lord Wellington determined to hazard one. The troops marched to the assault in five columns, one of which, under General Pack, was destined only to make a false movement, in order to deceive the enemy. After a desperate struggle, every point was carried; even the false attack was converted into a real one; and the allies in less than half an hour after commencing the assault, were complete masters of the place. The loss was considerable; upwards of 1,200 were killed or wounded; General Mackinnon, an officer of high promise, was

among the former; General Craufurd among the latter. But Lord Wellington justly considered that as the French army was now fast approaching, the British lost less even by a severe siege, than by a battle and siege united.

Marmont had established his winter cantonments on the banks of the Tagus, with a view both to the conveniency of supplies, and of supporting the operations against Valencia. In pursuance of the latter object, he had detached General Monthrun with 5,000 men, to take in the rear the army of Valencia. General Monthrun was too late; and having missed his object, amused himself with attempting a fruitless *coup-de-main* against Alicant; which prevented his co-operating with the main army. Marmont however collected, from the north and centre of Spain, a very considerable force, with which he arrived at Salamanca. He there heard of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo. He advanced however and offered battle; which Lord Wellington, who had now no object to fight for, prudently declined. The French army then withdrew, not to its former situation, but to establish itself in cantonments along the Tormes.

In consequence of this last change, the forces of the contending parties were placed in a situa-

tion very advantageous to the allies. Marmont and Soult being placed at the opposite extremities of the peninsula, their armies could not co-operate, nor even hold communication, unless in a remote and circuitous manner. The allied army was interposed between them and could direct its united strength upon any point. This advantage was very ably improved by Lord Wellington. He caused the whole army, with the exception of a small corps of observation, to march rapidly from the north upon Badajos. All the preparations had been made for the siege of that important fortress. The troops newly arrived, combined with those formerly under General Hill, composed a force truly formidable. Operations were immediately commenced. Notwithstanding the unfavourable season, which placed the troops up to the knees in mud, the works advanced with rapidity. The defence was conducted by the same governor and garrison, who had formerly resisted with success all the efforts of the allied army. At the end of a month, however, the approaches were carried to the foot of the walls, and a practicable breach was effected. On the night of the 6th April, therefore, Lord Wellington determined to storm the place. The result was singular. The main attack directed against the point where the breach had been effected, completely failed; and the British were repulsed

with very great loss. But two false attacks made, one by General Picton on the castle, the other by General Leith on the bastion of St. Vicente, both succeeded; and these false attacks took the place. A lodgment being thus established, both in the castle and in the town, the garrison immediately submitted. It was then 4,000 strong. The loss of the allies exceeded 3000 in killed and wounded; being greater than is usually incurred even in a sanguinary battle. Nothing except the urgent necessity of dispatch arising from the critical situation of the army, could have justified so great a waste of British blood.

Meanwhile the French armies were in motion. Soult having collected all the forces of the south arrived on the 8th of April, at Villa Franca. There hearing of the fall of Badajos, he immediately retreated, and his rear guard sustained some loss. Marmont did not attempt, as formerly, to effect a junction with the army of the south. He began with attempting to carry, by a *coup-de-main*, first Ciudad Rodrigo, and afterwards Almeida. Finding both places prepared to receive him, he pushed forward into the interior of Portugal, driving before him the British army of observation. On arriving at Castello Branco, however, he learned the result of the

siege, and evacuated that place on the very same day that he entered it. No time was to be lost in securing his retreat; for Lord Wellington with the bulk of his army immediately began a movement towards the north. The only fruit therefore which the French general did or could derive from this incursion, consisted in the plunder of a few districts. Nothing then could be more idle than the censures which some persons threw upon Lord Wellington for leaving the north unprotected, while he concentrated his whole army against Badajos. Never did he give a higher proof of generalship than in so doing.

All the frontier barriers having thus fallen, Lord Wellington determined no farther to delay the expedition into Spain, which he had long meditated. As a preliminary, he directed General Hill, who still commanded in the south, to endeavour to destroy the bridge of Almaraz, which formed the only communication, lower than Toledo, by which a great army could cross the Tagus. General Hill performed this service, which was attended with great difficulties, with the same skill, activity, and genius, which he had displayed formerly in the surprise of Girard.

On the 13th of June, the allied army broke up from their cantonments on the Agueda, and advanced into Spain. On the 16th, they entered Salamanca, the French army retiring before them; and they were received with extraordinary demonstrations of joy. The French had erected in this place three forts, which Lord Wellington had hoped speedily to reduce. They were found however to be considerably stronger than was expected; the first attack was unsuccessful; and it was found necessary to wait for some days the arrival of a battering train. The enemy hovered round, endeavouring to communicate with the garrison, and to throw in supplies; but all their attempts were frustrated by the activity of General Graham. On the 27th, the principal fort was stormed; and the rest, which depended on it, immediately surrendered. The French army then retired, and took a position behind the Douro.

It is with extreme diffidence, that we venture to criticise any measure of Lord Wellington; yet we think it our duty to state what occurs to us. Marmont was at this moment separated by a considerable space, both from Bonnet, who occupied the Asturias, and from the army of the centre. The main chance of success seems then to have been, by pushing him hard, before he

had formed a junction with either of these two corps. The delay occasioned by the siege of the forts of Salamanca, frustrated this object. Might not Lord Wellington have pushed on, leaving only a small force to blockade these forts? We scarcely think that, in a friendly country, they could have opposed a material obstacle to the retreat of the army. As it was, all the French corps in the north of Spain formed soon either a junction or a communication with each other. The chances were then against the success of the British; and it was only by accident, and an unexpected error on the part of the enemy, that a different result was produced.

The French broke down the bridges over the Douro; and Lord Wellington was not yet provided with the means of forcing a passage. Marmont was joined by Bonnet, which with other reinforcements, rendered his force equal, or superior to that of the English commander. He determined therefore to act on the offensive. He repaired the bridge at Toro, and passed over it a considerable body of troops, with the view of exciting the expectation, that the remainder also would cross at that place. Suddenly however this body was recalled, and the whole army was carried by a most rapid march, thirty miles up the river, to Tordesillas.

It there crossed, and placed itself on the left flank of the allied army, which was with difficulty preserved from being turned. This brilliant manœuvre completely changed the aspect of the campaign. Marmont had now established a communication with Madrid, so that all the armies in the north and centre of Spain were either united, or had the means of uniting; and they composed a force decidedly superior to that of the allies. Marmont however did not wait for their entire junction, but continued to press forward. Lord Wellington drew up his army in order of battle; but the French general, instead of accepting, made it his object to turn the British flank at different points. His attempts were defeated; yet, by repeatedly threatening the communication of the allies with Portugal, he succeeded in inducing them to retire gradually towards that frontier. On the 22d of July, both armies had crossed the Tormes. The British occupied a species of peninsula formed by the river, which bends southwards soon after passing Salamanca. The French, who had crossed at Alba, were in a condition to threaten the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo.

Marmont seems to have felt an extraordinary elation at the success with which his manœuvres had hitherto been attended. Instead of recollect-

ing, that the circumstances of France, with a great war to maintain at the other extremity of Europe, decidedly indicated, on this side, a system purely defensive; instead of reflecting, that nearly 20,000 men, from the armies of the north and centre, were on their march to reinforce him; he conceived at once the chimerical hope, entirely to cut off the English army. With this view, he extended his line so that it might enclose the allies within the position which they had taken up. His force, however, was not such as that this extension could be made without unduly weakening some point. His left became thus exposed to attack. The error thus committed was at once perceived and improved by the British commander. Nearly the whole army being instantly brought opposite to the enemy's left, an attack was commenced upon that wing. Three divisions under Generals Leith, Cole, and Cotton, charged in front, while General Pakenham formed another across the enemy's flank. This single movement decided the victory. The left wing made no resistance; the British troops overthrew every thing opposed to them. In the centre, the contest was more obstinate. General Pack was repulsed in his attack upon the hill of the Arapiles; the fourth division was forced to retreat before a French division; and the confusion was increased by Gen. Beresford being wounded and obliged to leave

the Field. These troops, however, being reinforced by those which had routed the French left wing, victory soon declared alike in their favour. Only the right wing now resisted ; but as the whole of the allied army could be directed against it, this soon shared the fate of the two others.—As the evening closed, the whole force of the enemy was in total rout. Favoured by the darkness, they fled through the woods and over the Tormes, the British army still pursuing. Their loss on this day consisted, besides dead, of 7000 prisoners, eleven pieces of cannon, and two eagles. Marmont lost an arm ; Bonnet was severely wounded ; so that the care of saving the wrecks of the army devolved on General Clausel, the third in command. The loss of the British was not very considerable, compared with so splendid a victory. About 700 were killed, and 4000 wounded ; in which latter number were included many of the General officers.

This victory was evidently achieved solely by the superior generalship of Lord Wellington ; and it raised his military fame to the highest pitch. Yet, as before hinted, we are not inclined to consider it as subverting our hypothesis, that military genius is not the prominent feature in the character of that great officer. His conduct certainly exhibits one of the most brilliant examples

of that *coup d'œil militaire*, which Marshal Saxe considers as the first quality of a General. But is this what can properly be called genius? There is in it no contrivance, no invention, no plan profoundly meditated. There is merely the prompt discernment of the enemy's error, and the equally prompt employment of all the known resources of war, to derive from it the utmost possible advantage.

The enemy fled towards the Douro, in total rout and confusion. The road behind them was strewn with baggage, ammunition, and wounded. On the day succeeding the battle, three French battalions, overtaken by the English cavalry, laid down their arms; and numerous prisoners were daily brought in. The enemy no longer attempted to defend the passage of the Douro. Lord Wellington crossed at Trudella, and on the 4th of August entered Valladolid. He did not, however, advance to Burgos, notwithstanding the importance attached by him to the possession of that place; because no artillery was yet come up, and because an important moral effect might be produced by acting in another direction. Leaving, therefore, a force under Gen. Paget to observe the motions of the enemy, he proceeded with his main body towards the capital. A slight disgrace and loss was sustained in an action of the vanguard, in consequence of the Portuguese

troops having been struck with a panic, which ill corresponded with their former conduct. But upon the whole there was nothing which could resist the progress of the allies. Joseph Buonaparte had not with him above 15 or 20,000 men, a large proportion of whom were Spaniards. On the approach, therefore, of the allied armies, he evacuated Madrid, and retired to Almanza, on the frontier of Murcia and Valencia; an advantageous position, whence he could communicate either with Soult or with Suchet. On the 12th of August the allied army entered the capital.—The Retiro, though garrisoned by 1500 men, immediately surrendered, and Guadalaxara was at the same time taken by the Empecinado. To render still more flattering the prospects of the allied army, intelligence was received of the arrival of a new expedition at Alicant. It consisted of British and Neapolitan troops from Sicily, joined to a Spanish force which had been trained at Majorca, under British officers. The whole consisted of 16,000 men, completely disciplined, and every way qualified for acting in the field.

It is, we repeat it, with extreme diffidence, that we venture to criticise the military conduct of Lord Wellington; yet we must say, that it never appeared to us so doubtful as at this crisis. The plan of operations, dictated by present cir-

cumstances, does appear to us to have been as follows : that leaving a body of troops to guard the passage of the Douro, the British army should have marched upon Alicant, have pushed aside the armies of Suchet and Joseph Buonaparte, have prevented their junction with that of Soult, and have united itself with the expedition under Gen. Maitland. All the forces of the allies would then have been united ; all those of the enemy separated. There would then, we should think, have been little difficulty in maintaining the capital, and even in carrying any object to which their arms might have been directed. It seems somewhat difficult to discover the reasons of that great importance which was attached to the possession of Burgos. Would a single fortress, situated so remotely from any other, have enabled its possessors to keep the field, in the face of a superior army of the enemy ? In short, the actual result was, that Soult, Suchet, and Joseph, formed a junction with each other, and ultimately with the northern army ; while the troops under General Maitland, shut up within the walls of Alicant, were of no service whatever to the common cause.

The French had derived some advantage from the absence of Lord Wellington during his expedition to Madrid. They sent a strong detachment westward, along the Douro, which raised the

blockades of Toro and Zamora, and withdrew the garrisons from the forts there erected. They advanced with the same view to Astorga; but that fortress had fallen immediately before their arrival. They then returned to Valladolid; but soon found this place untenable, when Lord Wellington began to move towards the north.— Upon his approach, they not only abandoned Valladolid, but did not even attempt to cover Burgos; and they retired towards the Ebro.— Lord Wellington found, therefore, no difficulty in investing the castle of Burgos. This fortification, once important, had so suffered by time and neglect, that at the commencement of the revolution, it could no longer present any resistance to the progress of an army. The French, who made it the centre of their power in the north of Spain, had been employed for more than two years in fortifying it anew; and they had now rendered it a place of very considerable strength. Lord Wellington, from the rapidity of his march, and the difficulty of the roads, had not been able to bring a battering train from Portugal, and was obliged to proceed by the slower method of sap. The resistance was conducted with extraordinary vigour; several attacks made by the allied army were repulsed; and the siege was protracted for nearly two months. The approaches, however, had been carried within a

hundred yards of the wall, and several practicable breaches had been effected, when Lord Wellington received intelligence, which induced him to move in another direction.

Soult appears to have determined never, unless under the extremest necessity, to quit his hold of Andalusia and the south. Even after the battle of Salamanca, which seemed imperiously to require his presence elsewhere, he still maintained the lines before Cadiz. Immediately, however, on receiving intelligence of the loss of Madrid, he formed the resolution to sacrifice every other object for the recovery of the capital. He began with destroying all the stores and ammunition, which it was not in his power to carry away: then on the night of the 24th of August, he raised the siege, which threatened to equal that of Troy in duration. His rear guard was precipitately driven out of Seville by a detachment under Colonel Skerret and General Cruz. At the same time the positions in the Sierra de Rondo were abandoned, and the whole French army directed its retreat upon Granada. Soult having collected his divisions in that city, did not halt, but continued his route through the province, and through Murcia, to the Valencian frontier. Ballasteros followed him at first with some activity, and gained advantages over his rear guard at Soja.

and Antequera. That general then entered Granada, from which time he thought proper to consign himself to total inactivity,

Soult found no difficulty in forming a junction with Suchet, and with the army of the centre; and these corps united did not amount to less than 70,000 men. No interruption seems to have been felt or feared from the Sicilian army, for the total inefficiency of which it seems somewhat difficult to account. It has been said that General Maitland did not follow the instructions communicated to him by Lord Wellington, which probably were, as reason seemed clearly to dictate, that he should join the allied army at Madrid. We suspend our judgment till further information, but certainly no army ever made a figure more perfectly insignificant, than was exhibited by this.

Succour failed from another quarter, whence failure has too often arisen. The army of Ballasteros, as we formerly noticed, had arrived at Granada. This chieftain had been first known as a leader of guerillas; and, in that tumultuary and marauding warfare, had greatly distinguished himself. Appointed afterwards to command the Spanish army in front of Gibraltar, he did not shew himself quite equal to such a station. There appeared a want of system and of common sense in

all his proceedings. However, he kept up the spirit of the people; and, in his old desultory manner, frequently succeeded in surprising and cutting off detachments of the enemy. Elated by these successes, he now anticipated nothing less than that he should be appointed commander in chief of the Spanish armies. At this very moment, however, that office had, with great judgment, been conferred by the Cortes upon Lord Wellington, at whose suggestion Ballasteros was ordered to advance, and fall upon the flank of the French army. National pride combined with personal disappointment to raise his discontent to the highest pitch: he disobeyed the orders, and appealed to the army and the nation against the measure adopted by the Spanish government.—The appeal, however, was not listened to; he was, without any opposition on their part, superseded, arrested, and sent an exile to Ceuta.

Ballasteros was certainly a brave man; and his opposition to a measure, which wounded both his national and his personal pride, merits some indulgence. But the circumstance which, in our opinion, can admit of no excuse is this; that he declined to act against the enemy, not only in Lord Wellington's manner, but in any manner whatever. At a moment, when the fate of Spain was to be decided, he abandoned himself to en-

tire inaction. For this reason we consider as lenient, even the severe punishment which was inflicted upon him.

Soult having now collected his whole force, left a small body of troops in Valencia, and then advanced, 60,000 strong, upon the capital.— General Hill had repaired thither from Estremadura, and had been strengthened by the junction of several detached Spanish corps. He had still, however, no force sufficient to cope with the enemy. He was, therefore, ordered, with the view of preserving the communication between the different allied corps, to retire behind the Adaja. Lord Wellington himself, raising the siege of Burgos, retreated to the same position. There was no longer then any obstacle to the junction of all the French armies, which was immediately effected. Soult now determined to make a present sacrifice of every other object, for the sake of driving the allied army beyond the Spanish frontier. He again abandoned Madrid; and collecting his whole force, 90,000 strong, marched against Lord Wellington. Notwithstanding his superiority, he did not venture to attack. He merely threw himself into positions which menaced the communication of the allied army with Portugal, and he fortified himself carefully in every successive position. Lord Wel-

lington, who could not prudently attack an enemy thus numerous and strongly posted, had no alternative but to retire into Portugal. Retreat is adverse to the British army; it is almost always the signal for an entire relaxation of discipline.—Dispersion, disorder, and loss, to a very considerable extent, were its consequences on the present occasion. Lord Wellington, in very severe general orders, reprimanded the officers, as affording by their negligence the chief ground for these irregularities.

The season was no longer favourable for active operations; and the British army was distributed in wide cantonments along the frontier, to prepare, by repose, for the toils of another campaign.

CHAPTER VI.

RUSSIAN POLITICS AND CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTH.

THESE events in the west of Europe, however great and important, have been eclipsed by the magnitude of others, which have passed and are still passing, in a different and distant quarter. It was in the north that Buonaparte was waging that great war, which, as he fondly hoped, would finally establish his supremacy in the European system. This campaign, as appears to us, was the result of a plan long premeditated. It will be necessary, therefore, to recur to some of the preceding events ; though in so doing it will be impossible to avoid recollections, which we would now willingly banish. That which has recently been signally well done by Russia, cannot wholly efface the memory of her ancient guilt. It will still behove us, for the instruction of mankind, to record the errors, which left her alone in the hour of distress ; which rendered it necessary, in order

to save herself from destruction, to lay her fields desolate, and her capital in ashes.

The treaties of Vienna and Tilsit, sufficiently testified the direction, as well as the boundless extent, of Napoleon's ambition. The Duchy of Warsaw and the Illyrian provinces could not, in themselves, be objects of desire. They possessed no peculiar natural advantages; and they were altogether extraneous and detached from his other dominions. His views were evident—the erection of Poland into a kingdom—the final humiliation of Russia—the partition of Turkey; with other objects perhaps still more remote. The powers, however, against whom these deep laid schemes were directed, seemed unconscious of the danger which menaced them. Instead of forming plans of mutual defence, they were wasting themselves in ruinous wars with each other. It is upon Russia, certainly, that the main blame of this aggression rests. Never, perhaps, was there a more enormous folly, than in the midst of her last dreadful war with France, wantonly, without cause or provocation, to precipitate herself into a new contest with Turkey. After the conclusion of peace, France permitted and even encouraged her to continue this absurd struggle. It seemed then probable, that the Ottoman strength, which had been in a state of such utter decay, would

entirely sink. The consequence was opposite.— This mighty impending danger from a power whom difference of manners and religion rendered odious, produced a development of strength which that empire had not for ages exhibited. It sustained, indeed, some reverses; yet on the whole it proved itself not unequal to contend with the united forces of the Russian monarch. Against Sweden, a weaker neighbour, the issue was different. The war commenced against his power indicated an oblivion of all ties of honour, generosity, and alliance. It was waged, however, with unmerited success. The resistance of Gustavus, which would have been noble had it not partaken so largely of frenzy and obstinacy, proved fatal to that monarch. The calamities which it brought upon the nation, gave such strength to a hostile faction, as enabled them to overturn his throne; and a necessary peace was bought by the surrender of a third of the Swedish dominions.

It was not spontaneously that Russia opened her eyes to the ruinous consequences of this line of policy. But, as the plans of Buonaparte advanced towards maturity, they were manifested in a manner to which it was impossible to be longer insensible. Already, in the spring of 1811, the grand army of France began to array itself on the Vistula. Vast magazines were formed;

the fortifications of Dantzic were strengthened and enlarged ; and every thing announced, that Russia, which alone remained the rival of France, was soon to be her victim. It appears to us probable, that this summer had been destined by Napoleon for the commencement of his northern campaign. Every thing then was favourable.—The disposition of Sweden was still hostile ; and Russia, elated by the hopes of subverting the throne of Constantinople, was straining all her efforts in this destructive contest. There appears no possible motive for delay, except the immense drain of resources caused by the peninsular war. The army which, after the treaty of Vienna, had been sent over the Pyrenees, was judged sufficient to bring it to a successful termination. Instead, however, of fulfilling this hope, it proved unequal to maintain its ground, without the aid of great and successive reinforcements. Before opening, therefore, a new war on a still greater scale, it became necessary to wait for the produce of another conscription. This delay proved the salvation of Russia ; and, through her, of the great cause.

Napoleon, before probably being aware of the necessity of this delay, had made preparations which indicated his designs in a manner very unequivocal. A just alarm seized the cabinet of St. Petersburg. If report may be credited, its

impressions upon this occasion were strengthened by the interference of the nobles, who in Russia may be considered as constituting the nation. This body had long viewed the policy pursued by their court with extreme disgust; and they now, it is said, intimated to Alexander, that unless a decisive change took place, his throne and his life were no longer secure. Russian history abounded with warnings, that such threats were not to be braved with impunity. Be this as it may, an entire revolution took place in the Russian councils. Not only did they begin to pursue the objects which sound policy dictated; but they pursued them in a manner truly eminent for wisdom, decision, and comprehensive views.—The first symptoms of this amelioration were exhibited in the measures pursued with regard to Turkey. Russia renounced at once her designs upon that power. She stopped her career of victory. A large proportion of the army acting in that quarter proceeded by forced marches to the Polish frontier; the rest withdrew behind the Danube, and merely covered the defensive line of that river. Propositions of peace were at the same time made to the Porte, combined with an offer to cede a large part of the conquests recently made. That cabinet however, which has never ranked with the most enlightened in Europe,

turned for a long time a deaf ear to these propositions ; nor was the pacification accomplished till a period, when it was almost too late.

In regard to Sweden, the same conciliatory system was attended with a success which could little have been anticipated. From the moment that a lieutenant of Buonaparte became Regent and heir to the crown, it seemed natural to expect, that Sweden was thenceforth to be a mere province of France. How the fact should have proved so very much otherwise, is a problem of which we have never yet seen a full solution. It has been said, that Bernadotte and Buonaparte were, at heart, always enemies. With regard to the latter at least, this does not seem probable. If Bernadotte was always the object of his hatred or jealousy, nothing prevented the ridding himself of *him*, as he had formerly done of Pichegru and Moreau, men higher in military reputation. Bernadotte doubtless found the people of Sweden, equally with that of Russia, hostile to a system which paralysed all the sinews of national industry. Unable to maintain himself in power without the good-will of the nation, he found it expedient to relax ; a proceeding too hostile to the views of Buonaparte not to call forth marks of resentment. These naturally kindled resentment in return ; and a breach was formed which,

under such circumstances, was not likely to be soon repaired. This alienation was first disclosed to Europe by the forcible occupation of Pomerania; and it soon appeared that intimate ties of union subsisted between the two northern kingdoms, which had lately been at war. Whether Russia purchased this alliance or neutrality, by any stipulation respecting the restitution of conquered provinces, has not yet appeared. Such a conduct would not ill accord with that spirit of moderation and profound wisdom, by which her councils were now animated.

No one who considers the relative situation of France and Russia can surely doubt which of the two was the aggressor in this war. It seems impossible to conceive, that the latter power, after so disastrous an experience, while her arms were distracted by the Turkish contest, and while almost all the military force of the continent followed the standard of her rival, should voluntarily provoke hostilities. The steps however which led to that issue, remain still in obscurity. France alone made public a few of the papers which passed immediately previous to the declaration of war. The circumstance of her communicating only these few, and reserving all which preceded, is of itself a sufficient ground of suspicion. Combined with other proofs, it

leaves no room to doubt, that all the seeds of the war had been sown by herself. At the same time, it certainly appears, that Russia, stung probably by repeated insults, and conscious of her own strength, had placed herself at last on pretty high ground. Prince Kurakin, in his communications to the French government, states, as the indispensable condition of peace, that France, leaving only a moderate garrison in Dantzic, should evacuate the Duchy of Warsaw, and all the Prussian territories. It was necessary, he insisted, that these two great empires should be separated by a neutral and independent power, which might form a barrier to each against the other. This was strong language to hold to a power which commanded such extensive resources, and had so fully established its dominion over the north of Germany. But Russia had placed herself in an attitude, which gave her no reason to decline the contest. She saw it impossible to remain in security, while a force so immense was accumulated on her frontiers. Since, as affairs now stood, a state of permanent peace was impossible, it might appear to her more desirable that the trial should be made at once, what measure of resistance she could make. After all, as there seems no doubt that Buonaparte was determined on immediate war, it might perhaps have been as advisable to follow

a course, which would have rendered the blame of commencing it still more evidently his.

Russia seems to have entered upon this contest, fully aware of its great magnitude; and her exertions to prepare for it had been very extraordinary. By vast levies, she had accumulated an army of 300,000 men, nearly triple of that which in the preceding war, her utmost efforts had brought into the field. Notwithstanding this great preparation, she had determined, with singular prudence, to follow a system strictly defensive. The Dwina, whose course lay considerably within her frontier, was fixed upon as the first point where a stand was to be made; and along its banks a range of fortifications and entrenched camps had been erected. Should circumstances render the contest there unequal, she was prepared, and had it in full contemplation, to retire still farther, and even into the interior of her empire. It was also most judiciously resolved, that the direction of this retreat should be upon Moscow. This was the mode in which St. Petersburg itself could be most effectually covered. Buonaparte could not advance upon that capital, leaving on his flank and rear the whole force of the Russian empire. What was still more important, he was thus led into tracks, never yet traversed by the complicated

machinery of a modern army;—forests, marshes, deserts; through which there was scarcely any path by which cannon, ammunition, and all the necessary supplies, could be dragged. A favourable omen was afforded by the example of Charles XII. whose army had perished in consequence of being conducted into those regions.

Meantime, Buonaparte was not less diligent in organizing all the means of success. Prussia, held completely within his grasp, was compelled to allow her whole military force to be employed in this war against her own independence. Austria agreed to furnish a contingent of 30,000 men;—a very weak measure, in our opinion, since it forfeited her independence, without fully satisfying the French emperor. Fifty thousand men were withdrawn from Spain, and the armies there having in vain attempted to bring the war to a termination, placed themselves now in an attitude of defence. These troops, with all that could be spared from the interior of France, from Italy, and from every quarter of Germany, began their march, so that they might reach the Polish frontier at the season favourable for opening the campaign. By the beginning of June, about 300,000 men had been there accumulated. Buonaparte himself arrived on the 21st at Gum-

binnen, and determined immediately to cross the Niemen.

The Russian army had assumed a position, which does not appear to us directed by the same profound wisdom as was manifested in their other arrangements. The Dwina, as we formerly observed, had been established as their line of defence, and to it, upon the approach of the enemy, all their armies were to fall back. We cannot then discover the policy which prompted them to bring forward their whole force, and arrange it along the Niemen. It formed thus a line very extensive, and of which, from its concave form, the posts were very widely separated. It might then have been foreseen, that an enemy so active and rapid, would succeed in penetrating this line at some point or other. Upon this oversight of the enemy, Buonaparte founded his plan of the campaign. It appeared to him that, by crossing at Kowno, and pushing forward upon the road to Wilna and Minsk, he might cut off all the Russian divisions which were to the south of that line. He might then, according to his usual system, attack and successively defeat the severed members of the enemy's corps. This plan was in part successful.

On the evening of the 23d June, the French army arrived at Kowno. Their passage was not disputed: a few Cossacks only appeared on the opposite bank. Bridges were instantly thrown over, and the army passed in the course of the night. Buonaparte immediately pushed forward to Wilna, the Russian head quarters, and the capital of Russian Poland. He entered it on the 28th. The enemy had evacuated the place on the day preceding, after setting fire to their magazines and military stores. Buonaparte continued to advance on the great road to Smolensk. The weather was dreadful; rain fell in torrents. Several thousand horses perished; and part of the artillery was buried in the mud. He pressed however eagerly forward. On the 8th Davoust had entered Minsk, from whence he advanced and seized upon the strong place of Borysow. On the 18th, he arrived at Orcha, and on the 20th at Mohilow on the Dnieper. Notwithstanding this rapidity, the corps of Dac-turow, which had been stationed between Sida and Grodno, found means, though with difficulty and by a circuitous march, to arrive at the Dwina. But the army of Bagrathion, 40,000 strong, and deriving additional importance from the high character of its commander, was irretrievably separated. Bagrathion successively attempted to rejoin the main army by Wilna, by

Minsk, and by Bobruysk, but every where found himself anticipated. He had nothing left therefore but to cross the Dnieper, and proceed towards Smolensk.

Buonaparte having so far succeeded, now collected his force in order to attack the Russians, while still unsupported by their left wing. They were strongly entrenched between Dunaburg and Drissa: yet upon the approach of the enemy, they formed the wise resolution not to engage with a part of their force against his united strength. They broke up therefore, and retired to Witepsk. Buonaparte occupied and demolished the entrenched camps, and then immediately followed the Russian army. He crossed the Dwina at Bechenkovitzki, and his advanced posts came into contact with the rear of the enemy. The Russians however, who had not yet been able to unite with Bagrathion, still adhered to their determination of retreating till that object could be accomplished. They broke from Witepsk and proceeded to Smolensk, where the junction, so long delayed, at length took place.

In the course of these movements, several partial actions occurred, in which the Russians appear to have been almost uniformly successful.

The superior personal bravery of their troops gave them an advantage in all operations on a small scale. Sebastiani was surprized opposite to Dunaburg, and a whole battalion cut off. Bagrathion defeated a large body of French cavalry. The Saxon troops, 3000 in number, were surrounded and entirely captured by General Tormesow at Kobrim. These achievements afforded a favourable omen, not only of the bravery of the troops, but of the skill and activity of the Russian generals: qualities, the exclusive possession of which had so long been the boast of their adversaries.

Notwithstanding these favourable occurrences, the advantage of this campaign had as yet been considerably on the side of France. She had driven her adversary beyond the limits of Poland; she had forced him to abandon all his entrenched camps, with the Dwina, the natural barrier of his empire. It appears to us clear, from the tenor both of the French and Russian accounts, as well as from the immense labour bestowed upon this line of defence, that the sacrifice of it had not been a voluntary measure. It had been made only because the separated corps of the army could no otherwise re-unite. The arrangement therefore, by which they were exposed to this separation, appears to us to have been a

grand military error. But it was well redeemed by that uniform and decided caution, with which they refused battle, when it could be fought only on unequal terms. They justly considered the sacrifice of a large extent of territory as a small object compared with that of preserving their army unbroken.

This occupation of Poland afforded to Buonaparte a promise of considerable advantage. The people were friendly to him. That iniquitous usurpation, which had extinguished their national existence and name, still rankled in their breasts; they sighed for their restoration by whatever hand; and by them alone; of all the nations of Europe, even Napoleon was hailed as a deliverer. His first act in entering Wilna, was to proclaim anew the kingdom of Poland. A diet was immediately convened, and a constitution framed. Every thing, notwithstanding the attempt to exhibit a contrary appearance, was evidently done by the sole dictation of a single man. Still it was something; they had the name at least and the form of liberty; and as their co-operation was necessary, they had a certain pledge of favourable treatment. Had Buonaparte remained for the present, content with the ground he had gained, and applied himself to improve these favourable circumstances, he might pro-

bably have established a firm footing in this quarter of Europe. But his impetuous genius still impelled him to push forward, and endeavour, in one campaign, to bring the war to a triumphant termination.

The advance was no longer so easy, when the whole of the Russian grand army was concentrated at Smolensk. That place, an ancient and irregular fortification, was still qualified to serve the purpose of an entrenched camp. But the main barriers of Russia were those which nature had secured to her: the vast extent of her domains; roads almost impassable; and above all a population animated by the fiercest determination to resist the invader. Never was a war more completely national; not the nobles only, with whom it had partly originated, but the inferior classes, and even the slaves themselves, were animated by the same spirit. All, in this hour of their country's danger, sunk every other interest in that alone, of saving her from subjugation.

Buonaparte allowed his troops a short repose after the succession of dreadful marches through which they had passed: then suddenly collecting them, he advanced upon Smolensk. The Russians were prepared to receive him. Part of

their army occupied the place; the rest was posted on the other side of the river. During the course of the 16th, the French made repeated and desperate attacks upon Smolensk, but were uniformly repulsed with great slaughter. The city however sustained severe damage, and was set on fire in several places. In the course of the following night, the Russians withdrew from it, and joined their force on the other side of the river. The whole united then began their retreat on the road to Moscow. The vanguard of the French, under Ney, attacked their rear-guard at Valentina, but were repulsed, after an obstinate contest.

It is impossible, without a minute knowledge of local circumstances and events, to pronounce any decided opinion on the conduct of the Russian general upon this occasion. The reasons which he assigns for evacuating Smolensk are ;— the devastation which the fire had occasioned in the place ; and the dread, that the French might anticipate him on the road to Moscow, and might cut him off from that capital. As Smolensk however formed now the only fortified position by which Moscow could be covered, a general clamour arose among the officers at its being so soon relinquished. Government were so far swayed by this opinion, that they transferred the

chief command from General Barclay de Tolly to Kutuzoff, a veteran of seventy-five, who had distinguished himself in a long series of wars. Succeeding events left no doubt as to the extreme prudence of this appointment.

Kutuzoff, although he disapproved the evacuation of Smolensk, did not choose to give battle in a country which no longer afforded any advantageous position. He continued the retreat of the army towards Moscow, while Buonaparte slowly and cautiously followed. At length his approach to the capital became so near, that unless some stand were made, he must inevitably become master of it. Kutuzoff now assumed a position at Borodino, which he considered as extremely favourable, and in which he wished to be attacked. It did not however certainly cover Moscow, because there were other roads leading to that capital. It was a position which Buonaparte, by manœuvring, might have forced him to relinquish. But the French emperor determined upon attacking. He considered probably, that the success of the campaign could only be secured by some great blow struck against the hostile army; that by advancing to Moscow, while it remained unbroken behind, he obtained glory only, attended, as afterwards proved, with extreme danger. He led therefore his troops to

battle. The contest was tremendous; scarcely does history record so awful a scene of human destruction. Sixty thousand of dead and wounded lay strewed on the field; and yet its fortune remained undecided. The issue, so far as we can discover by a collation of different accounts, seems to have been pretty nearly equal. The loss on both sides was almost alike immense. But on such occasions the advantage evidently rests with the party which had stood on the defensive. The Russians preserved their position, which was all they had aimed at; while Buonaparte, unable to gain a victory, remained baffled. He even retreated to some distance, though Cossacks only are said to have followed. Among the many French officers who fell on this day, attention was chiefly drawn by the infamous name of Caulincourt, the midnight murderer of the Duke of Enguien: he fell in the field, by a fate, of which he was unworthy. On the Russian side, a far more illustrious chief received his mortal wound. Bagrathion, whose heroism has formed a prominent feature in all the recent Russian achievements, closed here a life of glory. Irreparable were the loss, had there not at this moment arisen a new race of commanders, whose names, hitherto unknown to Europe, were soon placed in the foremost rank of military fame.

Buonaparte, soon after his retreat from Borodino, was joined by the corps of Victor, which secured to him still a numerical superiority over the Russians. Although he had failed, therefore, in his attempt to break the army, he determined, at whatever risk, and in whatever manner, to possess himself of Moscow. He immediately began to manœuvre, with the view of turning the Russians. Kutuzoff saw that he could defend Moscow only by fighting a battle upon its site; he considered its destruction as the consequence; and he does not seem to have been aware how fully his government was determined to sacrifice it to the safety of the empire. He considered also, that his thinned ranks might soon be filled from the militia of all the neighbouring provinces, who were crowding to join him. In pursuance then of that cautious system, which from the beginning had been acted upon, he withdrew to the south, and left open the road to Moscow. Buonaparte advanced without opposition; and, on the 14th September entered the Russian capital. But here a dreadful spectacle presented itself. From one extremity to the other, that ancient and renowned metropolis was in flames. The Russian government had long resolved and meditated this plan, to deprive the invader of the fruits of victory.—Every thing which admitted of it having been previously removed, persons appointed for that

purpose set fire to the city in various quarters, wherever the flames were most likely to spread. All the fire engines had been removed or destroyed. Before the French, therefore, could stop the progress of the flames, only a tenth part of the city remained unconsumed.

Scarcely does there occur in history an event more striking, and as it were appalling to the imagination, than this conflagration. It presents a splendid trait of heroism, combined with something terrible and savage. No one can suppose, that the Russian government would wantonly sacrifice so famed and splendid a city : they must have judged this the only sure mode to baffle the designs of the invader : and who then will deny, that they were highly justified. Certainly that cabinet thus afforded to the enemy and to all mankind, the most awful proof of their determination never to yield. Considered in this view alone, the spectacle of Moscow in flames must have fearfully appalled the heart of the tyrant.

The French army did not, amid the ruins of Moscow, enjoy that repose and plenty which they expected, and stood so much in need of. They soon found their situation more uneasy than ever. The province in which they were immediately situated, is not endowed with any fertility, which

could qualify it for supplying their wants. The neighbouring governments indeed, watered by the Volga and Oka, formed the granary of Russia, and were blessed with a luxuriance almost inconceivable. But the French could derive little benefit from this surrounding abundance.—Kutuzoff took a position at a small distance to the south of Moscow, in which he covered the provinces of Tula and Kalouga, which were the grand scene of this fertility. This position was so strong as to secure him against attack; and his strength and proximity rendered it impossible for the enemy to separate, and occupy any extensive range of territory. On the other side General Winzingerode was stationed with a large body of troops to exclude the enemy from the Petersburgh road and the northern provinces; a service which he performed in the most distinguished manner. Wittgenstein, who still defended the line of the Dwina, had carried on a very successful war in that quarter, against Oudinot and Macdonald.—He had rendered it impossible for them to form the siege of Riga, or to make any serious impression on that part of the empire. Reinforced now by 18,000 men from Finland, he began a movement upon Moscow. Every thing gave way before him. St. Cyr, who endeavoured to defend the important position of Polotsk, was completely routed and driven beyond the Dwina. Wittgen-

stein then continued his victorious march upon Witepsk, and upon the route by which the French army communicated with the west of Europe.— This movement was combined with another, which promised to render it completely decisive.

The exigency of her affairs had at length induced Russia to purchase peace from Turkey, by granting the demands of that power to their full extent. Flushed by her former successes, she had required the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the establishment of the Danube as the southern boundary of her empire. She now contented herself with that part of Moldavia, the smallest and least important, which lay on the eastern bank of the Pruth. She thus renounced, most wisely, almost all her recent conquests on that side, and was enabled to employ her whole force in averting the imminent danger with which herself was threatened. The army then which had been employed upon that frontier, immediately began its march through the south of Poland. United with that previously stationed in Volhynia, it formed an aggregate of 80,000 men. The French communication on this side was supported by the Saxon troops, and by the Austrian contingent under the Prince of Schwartzburg. These the Russian army drove before it, separated completely from the main army, and compelled to retire beyond

the Niemen. Nothing then prevented it from forming a junction with the force under Wittgenstein, on the high road leading to Moscow. The fate of the French army had then been sealed.—Cut off from their native country and all their resources, they must have been completely enclosed within the forests and wilds of Muscovy.

Buonaparte could not be insensible to the imminent perils which surrounded him. There was evidently no hope of safety but to fly, abandoning Moscow and all his conquests; yet from that step, the most extreme reluctance withheld him. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum* had as yet been his uniform motto; and to change it in the face of Europe, of his allies and his enemies, was a humiliation scarcely to be endured. He now made repeated attempts to draw the Russian generals into a negotiation. To have made peace, almost on any terms, while Moscow was still his, would have preserved to him, at least, the semblance of victory. His antagonists, however, conscious of their own strength, and of the dire necessity which urged him, turned a deaf ear to every proposal. This was not the time for them to treat. Having precipitated himself into such a situation, it behoved him to extricate himself by his own efforts. No resource remained, except that bitter one, which nothing could longer avert. Yet

even after the sacrifice had been made, it still remained a difficult task to save the army. Their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted; and to return by the road they had come, drained as it was of every resource, presented a hopeless prospect. Buonaparte appears to have conceived the plan of penetrating by the route of Toulga and Kalouga, which would have led him through fertile and unexhausted districts. As a preliminary to such a march, however, it was necessary to beat the Russian grand army, which covered that road. Kutuzoff, perceiving that movements were making indicative of this intention, resolved to anticipate them. He attacked by surprise the advanced guard of the French army under Murat, and totally defeated it with the loss of 3000 prisoners and 60 pieces of cannon.

This disaster seems to have convinced Buonaparte, that his intended retreat could no longer admit of delay. Reluctantly, therefore, and too late, he formed the resolution of abandoning Moscow. On the 19th of October, the French army began its march, leaving only a garrison in the Kremlin. This last measure seemed to have been adopted rather with a view to retard the advance of the enemy, than with any hope of retaining possession of the place. On the 22d, General Winzingerode arrived, drove the French

garrison out of Moscow, and re-established the Russian ensigns in the Kremlin. Approaching, however, too near to the enemy with a view of inviting a suspension of bloodshed, he was surrounded and taken prisoner. The French, in seizing his person, are said to have committed a breach of the laws of war : at the same time, as they had never the reputation of being very scrupulous, we cannot easily excuse this gallant officer for the imprudence of having thus placed himself in their power.

Buonaparte on leaving Moscow, made a feigned movement towards the Kalouga road, with the view of inducing the belief, that his retreat would be in that direction. Having thus diverted the attention of Kutuzoff, he immediately began to retreat by forced marches, and with prodigious rapidity, on the road to Smolensk. He himself, apparently with the sole view of securing his personal safety, marched in the van, surrounded by the imperial guards, whom, amid all the late battles, he had preserved unbroken. Eugene, the viceroy, in whom he seems to have placed a confidence not justified by any military achievements, brought up the rest of the army, with all the artillery and baggage. To them this march was dreadful. They had to force their way through roads almost impassable, without supply, without

resources, with all the elements to contend with. Clouds of Cossacks hovered on every side, harassed them with continual attacks, seized all the stragglers, and cut off the army in detail. Millaradovitch, a Russian general, made a vigorous attack upon the rear guard, and defeated it, with considerable loss. Platoff, near Visma, broke in with his Cossacks, threw all into confusion, and carried off 3000 prisoners, with 128 pieces of cannon. Kutuzoff, mean time, with the main body of the Russian army, did not act at this point, but was marching by a parallel and shorter route to accomplish ulterior objects. The French army, therefore, reached Smolensk, though not without having sustained considerable loss. But here it proved that the repose, by which alone they could have been re-established, was not to be enjoyed. Their situation was truly critical; for while Kutuzoff followed close behind, Tchitzhagoff, with the army from Volhynia and Turkey, would soon block up all the avenues by which they could advance. No time was to be lost to resume their march. On this they left Smolensk. But the calamities which they had experienced before arriving at that place, became as nothing when compared with those which now overtook them. The frost set in with a severity scarcely known even in these climates. All the horses perished; there were no longer any means

of conveyance either for the baggage or artillery ; all shelter, all provision failed ; and this army, lately so formidable, exhibited to mankind a spectacle of woe, beyond all that they had ever inflicted. The sword of the enemy soon came to complete the calamity. Kutuzoff, who with his main body had been marching by a route parallel to that of the French, now unexpectedly struck in, in the line of the retreating army. Davoust's corps occupied the central part, connecting the advanced guard with the rear. This was the corps surprised by Kutuzoff. The defence was vigorous, Buonaparte himself commanding in person, and exerting every effort to save this vital point of his line. But all was vain ; the route was complete ; nearly the whole corps, 24,000 strong, was destroyed or taken. He himself fled from the field of battle. The destruction of this body separated entirely the rear guard under Ney from the rest of the army. This whole force, completely surrounded, were compelled, after a vain resistance, to lay down their arms. In these two affairs the number of prisoners amounted to 24,000, besides nearly an equal number of killed and wounded. More than half the French army was lost.

Buonaparte, with all that remained of his troops, hurried forward to the Beresina. He

hoped to effect his retreat by the way of Minsk, which was the best, and led most directly to the Vistula. This road, however, was now occupied by Tchitzagoff, who had entered Minsk, had possessed himself of the magazines and hospitals, there deposited, and had seized every thing belonging to the enemy which could be found in that quarter. He was now prepared to dispute the passage of the Beresina. There remained, however, another route, leading directly to Wilna and Königsberg, and by it the French army, though more circuitously, might at length arrive upon the Vistula. Buonaparte now made it his sole object to force his passage in this direction. The Beresina, being now nearer its source, was passed without difficulty ; and he formed a junction with the corps of Victor and St. Cyr, which had been employed in watching Wittgenstein. His force was now raised to 70,000 men, of which the division that had newly joined, still possessed its cavalry and artillery. Wittgenstein and Tchitzagoff having formed a junction, commenced an attack upon the rear of the retreating army. The action was obstinate. Of its result, no very detailed or satisfactory account has yet been received. It would rather appear, however, that it had been in favour of the French, and that the Russians had sustained a repulse. Under favour of this success, the French army hastened, by

forced marches, towards Wilna. No obstacle opposed their progress, and they arrived without having sustained any farther important loss. And here, as some obscurity rests upon the subsequent events, it will be convenient to close for the present, our narrative of military operations. Some others of a different description were meanwhile passing, which are not unworthy our attention.

The French people appeared to have completely bent their neck beneath the yoke. A few attempts made at the commencement of Napoleon's sway, having proved abortive, discouraged a repetition. The nation, become habituated to his government, submitted patiently, though not cheerfully. But now, when he and his army were buried in the snows and deserts of Russia, an opportunity seemed afforded of asserting anew that liberty lately the object of such idolatry. In order to increase his military strength, Buona-parte had called out a national guard of 100,000 men, to whom the internal defence of the country was left. But this body was not of the same composition with the regular troops, nor attached to him by the same ties. They combined the character of citizens with that of soldiers. Among them a party seems to have been formed, which eagerly sought a change in the present order. Their hopes were enlivened when the atmosphere

in the north began to darken, and the interrupted communications threw a mystery over the fate of the French army. A conspiracy against the existing government was then organized, and partly carried into execution. Concerning this transaction, we have no information, besides that which the reigning powers have chosen to communicate; and it was their object and interest to represent it as merely the act of a few individuals. It is not denied, that a large body of the national guards rose against the officers of government, and openly set their authority at defiance. But it is asserted, that they acted merely in blind obedience to the orders of their chiefs, and under the belief of the Emperor's death, of which the latter had falsely assured them. Certain it is, that by the efforts of an energetic and watchful police, the conspiracy was crushed, the ringleaders seized, condemned, and executed. But the deep alarm with which the government was visibly struck, seems to indicate that they viewed the causes as lying deeper: that they considered the state of the public mind as formidable. Napoleon himself appears to have been more strongly affected by this movement, than even by the ruin of his army, and the wreck of all his ambitious hopes. The moment that the communication was re-opened, he determined to set out for Paris. At Smorgony, even before the army had reached

Wilna, he assembled his generals, and leaving the command to the King of Naples, immediately took his departure. He travelled *incognito*, either from necessary attention to personal safety, or from being unwilling to exhibit himself to the world in such a humiliation. On the 18th December he arrived at Paris, which he found tranquil. His name and presence, still terrible, prevented any other commotion ; and he proceeded without fear or mercy, to drain the population and resources of France, in order that he might be again enabled to appear in the field.

Scarcely does history present a reverse so awful, such a descent from the height of fame and power, as was exhibited in this memorable campaign. He who had hitherto been the idol of fortune, and whose every step victory had attended, now tasted the lowest dregs in the cup of humiliation. The somewhat extravagant idea too, which had been formed of his talents as a warrior, was succeeded now, in the mutable estimate of the multitude, by a sentiment bordering on contempt. This is probably unjust. A single disastrous campaign cannot efface the recollection of so many others which had been crowned with the most splendid success. At the same time, on a critical examination, it will probably appear that most of the misfortunes of this cam-

paign may be traced to errors in the modes of conducting it. Placed in new and untried emergencies, he did not discover the talents which were necessary to meet them. He acted upon a system suited to other countries, and other circumstances. The grand error which laid the foundation of the whole failure, was that of advancing to Moscow, leaving vast unbroken armies behind him. This he had never ventured in any former campaign, even when no such mighty obstacles of nature impeded his movements. In apology of this rash step, it can however be pleaded, that thus only he could signalize the campaign by any brilliant exploit; thus only he could hope to give to the war the appearance of a triumphant termination. To have stopt short at the Russian frontier, would have been a humiliation to be exceeded only by that which actually befel him. The same apology may be pleaded for his remaining at Moscow, and allowing the period to pass when his retreat might have been effected with comparative safety. But it is in the conduct of that retreat that he seems to have failed most signally. He had inexperience, indeed, to plead; for it had not been usual with him to turn his back upon an enemy. But there certainly appears to have been a degree of mismanagement quite extraordinary. In retreat, always a difficult and dangerous movement, the grand rules to

be observed are two:—1. That the army should move in a compact body, so that the whole may be in a condition to bring aid to any part attacked. 2. That, in the rear, as the most exposed point, the flower of the troops should be posted. Instead of observing the first rule, the several divisions seem to have marched in a long and straggling line, with wide intervals between each, so that when attacked, they fell successively, without aid or concert. The second rule was still more remarkably violated. The imperial guard was the most select body in the army, and throughout the former battles, had been carefully preserved entire. Instead, however, of covering the retreat of the other divisions, it was always kept far in advance, nor ever, in the utmost extremity, afforded them the smallest support. This arrangement was not rendered the more respectable by the motive from which it evidently originated. It must have been made by Napoleon from the sole motive of securing his own personal safety. He himself marched surrounded by this chosen band, and left the rest of the army to whatever fate might befall them. We blame not a commander, and above all a commanding sovereign, when, after attempting in vain to save his army, he effects his own escape. Buonaparte was justified, we conceive, in flying from the corps of Davoust, after seeing it in total rout. But if

any commander, from motives merely personal, makes dispositions which endanger and ultimately produce the ruin of the army which has followed him, he certainly violates, in the most decided manner, his duty towards his troops.

With regard to the ultimate result of this most distinguished campaign, we are scarcely prepared, amid the confusion of so changed an order of things, to form any very precise estimate. One thing seems ascertained, that the Russian empire is henceforth secure from external attack. Buonaparte himself will not hazard the loss of another army amid its wastes and snows. Relieved thus from the dread of subjugation, this power will probably adhere with constancy to that cause in which she has so zealously embarked. In a condition to inspire terror without feeling it, she will make war with every advantage. In regard to Napoleon, on the other hand, the immense levies which he has ordered, and to which the French people seem submitting, must soon replace the numerical strength of his armies. But it seems scarcely possible, that by any arrangement, however skilful, they should soon be brought into that high state of discipline, and to those habits completely military, in which their main strength has hitherto consisted. Above all, their name can no longer inspire Europe with the same terror.—

All the powers who formerly wavered, will now be confirmed in the opposite cause; and many, who submitted through fear, will begin to waver. The avenues to further conquest appear to be, in a great measure, closed against him. We should, indeed, conceive, that from motives both internal and external, peace will now appear to him really desirable. He will not consent to make it immediately. He will choose before hand to place himself in such an attitude, as may obviate all appearance of fear or necessity. But upon the whole, the present aspect of Europe does seem to encourage a hope, that the wishes of mankind may, at no very distant period, arrive at this happy consummation.

CHAPTER VII.

AMERICA, AND THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

IN that utterly disorganized and turbulent state, into which political society has been thrown throughout Europe, no circumstance, perhaps, strikes deeper at the well-being of private life, than the reigning principles on the subject of political economy. This aspect of things is the more afflicting to the wise and philanthropic observer, from having succeeded to another, which opened the fairest prospects. Under the ancient prevalence of the mercantile system, France and England were engaged in a constant anti-commercial warfare. Every branch of industry, and every improvement, which was introduced into one country, was considered as so much withdrawn from the prosperity of the other. Prohibition was multiplied upon prohibition; and the little intercourse which took place between the two nations, was almost entirely of a clandestine nature. To

wards the close of the last century, however, there arose in both countries a class of philosophers of the most comprehensive views and accurate observation, who applied their faculties to the investigation of this subject. These great men soon demonstrated the folly and futility of those efforts by which states had endeavoured to found their own prosperity upon the ruin of their neighbours. They proved, that to have in their vicinity great and opulent communities, with whom they might carry on an unfettered intercourse, was the surest mode of becoming themselves great and opulent. It fortunately happened, that the affairs of Britain were then under the direction of a statesman, by whom these enlightened views were fully understood and appreciated. Under his auspices was formed the commercial treaty of 1786, by which the market of these two great empires was almost completely opened to each other's productions. Scarcely, however, had Europe begun to reap the benefits of this enlightened system, when it was succeeded by a fatal reverse. The catastrophe of the French revolution broke up almost all the ties by which civilized nations had been mutually united. A long and deadly war ensued, carried on with an animosity unprecedented in any former period of our history. All direct commercial intercourse was thus interrupted; yet the commodities of the respective

kingdoms still reached each other by circuitous channels. France, consumed by intestine anarchy, and completely driven from the ocean, saw her commerce almost annihilated, while that of her rival rose to a pitch of prosperity, unexampled in any other age or country. The French rulers, struck with mortal envy, eagerly sought the means of aiming a blow at their enemy in this vital part. The desire was inflamed, when the absolute dominion of one man secured internal quiet, and turned all the views of the administration towards foreign conquest. It was then conceived, that by excluding all British productions, and prohibiting their use throughout France and her dependencies, a blow might be given to this envied commercial greatness. The present ruler, who appears to be by no means enlightened upon these subjects, either entertained, or sought to inculcate the absolute belief, that such measures would have a tendency to cherish the industry of France itself. The system was therefore carried at once to an extremity, which had never before been witnessed in Europe. It was established too during a short interval of apparent peace. And here we may observe, that though indicating certainly a very hostile disposition, this prohibitory system cannot be considered as a violation of the law of nations. Every nation has a right to prohibit the commodities of another to

any extent which it may judge expedient ; this right each, to a certain extent, has always exercised. So violent a use of it cannot indeed be observed without jealousy, but it is not in itself a ground for any hostile measure. It was not accordingly made one of the motives of the war, which so quickly succeeded. But when hostilities were once commenced, Britain, exasperated at the commercial enmity exerted against her, was naturally disposed to employ, as far as she lawfully might, her great naval superiority in retaliation. She blockaded the enemy's ports, and the mouths of her rivers, for the mere purpose of preventing all entrance of merchant vessels. This had not been customary in modern warfare. Here there was a certain stretch of the law of nations, though not perhaps great, considering the provocation received. To see himself, however, thus braved and confined, roused the fierce and irritable pride of the French ruler. Intoxicated then by that splendid victory, which laid the Prussian monarchy at his feet, he issued, on his arrival at Berlin, the famous decree which bears the name of that city. It renewed and extended all the prohibitory regulations ; but its grand feature consisted in the blockade which it proclaimed of the British islands. All vessels bound to a British port, or returning thence, were by this decree, made liable to capture. In retaliation of

this measure, the British government, four months after, issued an order, prohibiting all intercourse between one French port and another ; and subjecting to capture neutral as well as French vessels which engaged in that trade. No farther proceedings took place for some time, the attention of the French emperor being entirely occupied by other objects. Returning victorious, however, from his campaign in the north, he immediately resumed his commercial hostilities. From Milan he issued a new decree, re-enacting, with augmented vigour, all the provisions of that of Berlin. The prohibitory system was at the same time carried to an unheard of extreme. Not only was every article produced in Britain or her colonies excluded ; not only was its use proscribed ; but every thing of this description, suspected to exist within the French territory, was searched for, seized, and committed to the flames. These violent proceedings were met by the British government with a very prompt retaliation. In a few weeks appeared the Orders in Council, by which a system similar to that announced in the French decrees, was proclaimed in still broader and bolder language. All trade was prohibited to every country, in alliance with France or any of her dependencies: every vessel so employed, was made liable to seizure. A single exception was made in favour of vessels which

had previously touched at an English port. This was intended to meet a clause in the decrees, by which all ships in that predicament were made liable to confiscation.

These orders of the British government were, we believe, issued in the first instance, less from the spontaneous disposition of either ministry, than with a view to gratify the mercantile interest, who called loudly for some such measure. They were not only indignant against France, but affected by a very idle jealousy of the wealth which the shipping interest of America were gaining by neutral navigation. To meet this disposition, the last ministry issued the order of January, 1807. The present ministry, who wished to attain the praise of superior activity, afterwards issued the other, which went greatly beyond it. It thenceforth became *their* measure, to which they adhered after it had lost all its popularity. Their opponents now sought to distinguish themselves by recommending freedom of trade, and full toleration to neutrals. They were in our opinion in the right. Yet, on comparing the whole of their own language and conduct, we entertain some doubt whether this arose from any profound insight into political economy; whether they did not act merely from the usual principle of contradiction;

and were not right, because their adversaries happened to be in the wrong?

It is by both parties admitted, that these measures were contrary to the law of nations. Both defend them solely on the ground of retaliation. Here Britain has undoubtedly the advantage. The Berlin Decree was the first of the series; for the violations previously alleged by France, were slight, doubtful, and after great provocation given. The question then is, whether Britain had a right to retaliate? Without entering into a long discussion on the law of nations, we shall merely state the opinion in which most perhaps will concur, that, provided neutrals, after fair and full time given, took no measures to vindicate their right of trading with this country, we were then at liberty to retaliate. Neutrals having recognized by acquiescence, the validity of such proceedings, had no title to complain. But the misfortune is, that the only great neutral against whom all these decrees and orders were aimed, had not sufficient time allowed her to shew the course which she intended to pursue. The first order was issued four months after the Berlin Decree, a sufficient time for a vessel to go and return, but not for ascertaining the measures which the American government might take, or the result of these measures. As for the orders consequent on

the Milan Decree, they were issued before it was possible for the decree to have been heard of in America, far less any accounts to be transmitted of its reception. There was therefore a deficiency on this ground, in the right of Britain to pursue such measures. Even supposing, however, this right perfectly clear, she lay under no necessity to exercise it. Her forbearance would have met the applause and admiration of the world. The question is then what interest she had, or if she had any, in enforcing a right, to which much odium was certainly attached?

It may be laid down as a fixed principle, that every restraint laid on the commercial intercourse between two nations, falls equally upon both. Whatever therefore France was made to suffer by the Orders in Council, Britain must have suffered along with her. Now commerce is to the latter power an object of much greater importance than to the former. Her resources arise much more from that source; hence the loss will by her be more sensibly felt. Buonaparte, it appears, in the hope and chance of annihilating British commerce, had determined, for the present, entirely to sacrifice his own. He had adopted to its utmost extent, that fierce and desperate policy. To take measures then against commerce in general, was to second his views. We are far

from thinking, indeed, that the injury caused by these orders was of that great magnitude, which faction represented. Doubtless from that era must be dated a commercial depression, hitherto unexampled. The grand cause of this, however, appears to us to have rested, neither in the French decrees, nor in the British orders. The truth is, that Buonaparte was now enabled to carry his system of exclusion to a much greater extent than heretofore. He was entirely master of the coasts of Germany, Prussia, and Italy, as well as of France. The army returned from the Russian campaign were drawn up in an unbroken line along these coasts, where they acted the part of *Douaniers*. Russia, seduced or intimidated, had fully adopted this system; so that the whole continent was now shut against the introduction of British merchandize. The orders in council rendered this exclusion still more complete, but they did not create it. The great injury done by them consisted then, we apprehend, in the total alienation of America. The government of that country was, doubtless, partial, basely partial, to France; but, subjected to the popular will, they could never have carried their criminal designs into execution, had not provocation been given. It was by the orders in council chiefly, that they were enabled to carry the people along with them

in that series of hostile measures, which terminated at last in open war.

This view of the subject naturally leads us from considering the conduct of Britain, to that of the other power whom these regulations chiefly affected. The administration of America, since it was no longer directed by the superior wisdom of Washington, had greatly changed its aspect. That great statesman and founder of American liberty, had been uniformly attached to the federal system, which tempered by an aristocratical mixture the violence of popular government. It sought also to cherish the trade and growing industry of the states, by an amicable connexion with Great Britain. The popular party, however, derived from the practice of universal suffrage a strength, of which they soon became conscious. They then rose to an ascendancy, which they are not likely soon to lose. Jefferson, whom the preponderance of this party raised to the presidency, introduced maxims and principles entirely new. Instead of the former desire to cultivate friendly sentiments towards the government of Britain, that of France was idolized with almost fanatical zeal. The despotism of its present ruler, his iniquitous usurpations over every neighbour, that universal dominion at which he so openly aimed, were all passed over in silence. Even the injuries

committed against America herself, which were frequent and multiplied, though not borne quite so tamely, were received with every possible excuse and indulgence. This course of proceeding was suited to the inclination of the lower classes, who had now taken the lead. All these were attached to France. The first and most respectable source of this partiality arose from the aid rendered by that country, in the war which terminated by the assertion of their independence, the memory of which they might be excused for cherishing. Afterwards, the adoption of a form of government congenial to their own, produced a species of fraternity, which not all the excesses with which they stained it, nor the quite opposite result to which it led, were able to dissolve.— Besides, though their great and real interests lay in an alliance with Britain, yet from the ascendancy of that power on the ocean, they were more exposed to present vexations from her than from her rival. The multitude feel only what is present, and hence a democratic administration is seldom characterized by any extensive views. There was, unfortunately, one point in which it was scarcely possible to avoid a collision. Similarity of language and manners facilitated the escape into American vessels, of seamen employed in the British naval service. They were allured, not only by the prospect of liberty, but by a higher

rate of wages, which they there received. The right of searching the merchant vessels of neutrals for deserters, was one which had been uniformly recognized and acted upon. It was one which Britain could not surrender, without the danger of reducing her navy to a state of total inefficiency. But unfortunately, the same circumstance which tempted the escape of the seamen, was apt also to lead to the mistake of considering Americans as British, and impressing them accordingly.—Our naval commanders, who are accustomed to prompt and decisive action, often, perhaps, exercised this harsh right not in the gentlest manner. Thus a habit of irritation was generated. The British government always professed its readiness to accede to any arrangement by which American vessels might be exempted from search, without the British navy being deprived of its seamen. None hitherto proposed, however, has appeared to them satisfactory. We are not prepared to give an opinion, whether some method might not be found. But so far as we can observe, the general disposition of ministers upon this point, has been exceedingly moderate, prudent, and conciliatory. This particularly appeared, when a naval commander of some eminence endeavoured to extend the right of search to the armed ships of America. The conduct of administration on this occasion was the more meritorious, as they

were urged by their own too zealous adherents to a course quite opposite. They disavowed the proceeding, however, recalled their commander, and offered every possible reparation for the injury done. The Americans, therefore, could not make this a ground of war; yet the tragical catastrophe with which this affair was attended, left a root of bitterness, which was never wholly extracted.

The first step taken by the Americans for the vindication of their neutral rights, was of a very extraordinary nature. We allude, of course, to the embargo. It cannot surely be considered in any other light, than as an act of commercial suicide. Because they were excluded from one branch of trade, they voluntarily interdicted themselves from that, and from every other. Doubtless, an extravagant vanity led them to hope, that the privation of their commerce, even for a short interval, would reduce the other powers to grant all their demands. They were completely deceived; the embargo lasted for a year; their own sufferings were immense; yet Britain did not make a single concession. Tired of vain sacrifices, they voluntarily withdrew the measure.

In 1809, a gleam of reconciliation presented itself. The last ministry had sent out as ambas-

sador Mr. Erskine, son of the then Lord Chancellor. Their successors, somewhat too ambitious to prove their moderation, continued him in this important situation, for which his age had scarcely prepared him. Mr. Erskine, however, seems still to have been imbued with the principles of his former employers. From motives exceedingly meritorious, but without any sufficient authority, he concluded a treaty, by which the orders in council were to be recalled, and every thing arranged to the satisfaction of the American government. There is no doubt, we think, that the British ambassador went here beyond his instructions; yet ministers might have considered, whether it would not be wise to ratify a treaty thus signed by their accredited minister. They would by so doing have raised high the national character for public faith; and, without the shame of retracting, they would have disposed of the orders in council, of which, by this time, they might well have been tired. Such were not their views. The treaty was disavowed; its ratification refused; Mr. Erskine was recalled; and Mr. Jackson sent out as ambassador in his stead.

This change was far from auspicious. The first step taken by the new minister, was not only to assert that Mr. Erskine had exceeded his instructions, but to endeavour to shew, that the

American government must have known him to have done so. The Americans positively denied this last allegation; the British minister reasserted, and again endeavoured to prove it. It appears to us clear, that this conduct was completely irregular and outrageous. It matters very little, whether or not the allegation were true, though we scarcely think it probable. But Mr. Jackson's purpose, and the justification of the British government, were completely answered by the simple statement that Mr. Erskine had actually exceeded his instructions. To prove that the Americans knew him to have done so, and that they were liars in denying it, was completely a work of supererogation. It could serve no possible purpose, except to irritate and inflame those whom it was his business to conciliate. We cannot, therefore, at all wonder, that the American government should have taken the strong step of immediately suspending all diplomatic intercourse with this negociator.

We must again do ministers the justice to say, that so far as was compatible with their erroneous system, they studied the conciliation of America. Most wisely, on this occasion, they forbore to make the treatment of Mr. Jackson a ground of quarrel. They were even, it is said, disposed at first to have disavowed his conduct, till they

learned, that the American federalists, out of pure party spirit, had espoused its defence. It might then appear necessary to support him, in complaisance to such steady friends. However, Mr. Jackson was allowed to return, and a new ambassador was promised. Whether from design or accident, however, the departure of Mr. Foster was delayed much longer than would have been desirable.

The next measure to which, after discontinuing the embargo, the Americans had recourse, was one of a much more rational character. It consisted in the non-intercourse bill, by which the vessels, both armed and unarmed, belonging to either power, were excluded from the American harbours. Thus with the least possible injury to themselves, they testified their resentment, and afforded to the cabinets complained of, a motive for changing their system.

Buonaparte did not, in his connexions with America, manifest any symptoms of dexterous or skilful policy. With the favourable disposition of that government towards France, the slightest address, or even forbearance, would have been sufficient to involve them in a war with his adversary. But accustomed to command rather than to persuade, he employed the former method,

even where there existed no means of enforcing it. His conduct towards this power exhibited repeated insults and aggressions, against which, in order to preserve appearances, America was obliged to shew some resentment. The measure of non-intercourse, which bore a certain shew of impartiality, and was directed partly against himself, excited his keenest indignation. This feeling, and probably also the extreme want of funds, impelled him to the step of causing all the American vessels in his ports to be confiscated, and the proceeds placed in the treasury. On farther consideration, however, he was led to a more judicious course of proceeding. He resolved to avail himself of the visible partiality of America, in order to bend that power to his purposes. On the 5th of August, 1810, therefore, he formally notified to Mr. Armstrong, the American ambassador, that the Berlin and Milan decrees, so far as they affected neutral trade, were on the 1st of November following, to cease and determine. Although he did not at the same time restore the confiscated property, America immediately assumed a friendly aspect. She met the concession made by withdrawing the non-intercourse bill, so far as it regarded France, while she preserved it in full force against England.

The British government, which had always urged retaliation as the ground for justifying their Orders in Council, were now called upon by America to revoke these orders. The opportunity, we think was fair, for adopting at last that wise and salutary measure. Ministers, however, still held out. They first insisted, that positive proof should be afforded of the decrees having actually ceased to be carried into execution. On the other side, it was urged with reason, that the termination of these decrees having been officially announced, must be supposed to have taken place, until some evidence to the contrary was produced. The British ministers appear, after some time, to have quitted this ground, and to have taken another. Although the French ruler had made this concession to America, he still continued with as much determination as ever, his unprecedented warfare against British commerce. Until he could be induced to make a general change of system, it could not reasonably be expected, that Britain should omit the only means of retaliation which was within her reach. Here too, however, the Americans had good argument on their side. The capture of neutral vessels, proceeding to or from an English port, was the only part of the Berlin and Milan decrees, by which the law of nations was positively violated. It was the only

part therefore on which Britain could found that system of retaliation, of which America complained. There remained now only the rigid prohibition of British commodities, doubtless a very powerful and effectual mode of hostility. But it was one which all the law and practice of modern nations authorized the French government to employ. Above all, it could never be expected, that America should make any exertion for the purpose of forcing the admission of British goods into the ports of the continent. Ministers indeed strenuously denied any design of advancing such a pretension ; yet, the fact is, that it was necessarily implied in the principle upon which they were now proceeding.

The measure which was thus refused to motives of external policy, was now imperiously called for, by circumstances occurring within the kingdom. The closing of all the ports of the continent, joined to the suspension of intercourse with America, had created a measure of commercial suffering, which had not been experienced for ages. All the manufactures, which had been carried on with a view to foreign consumption, were at once annihilated. Patiently to endure such sufferings, is more than can fairly be expected from the uninstructed classes of society. Commotions arose in districts peculiarly affected, which inspired the

most serious alarm. They were with difficulty prevented by military force, from breaking out into open insurrection. Crimes were committed of a magnitude before unknown in this country ; and a general character of atrocity seemed to have infused itself into the national disposition. Ministers felt the propriety and almost necessity of yielding to this cry of the nation. They consented, that an investigation should take place into the consequences which had followed from the orders in council, and into the question, whether it might not now be expedient to revoke them? A committee of the house was accordingly formed, and a great mass of evidence collected. The lead was soon taken by Mr. Brougham, an active young statesman, who, we believe, understood questions of commercial policy better than most of the senior members on either side. He conducted the enquiry very ably, and with that species of head-long force and impetuosity, which characterize all his exertions. It was difficult to separate the effects of the continental exclusion, and of the orders in council. The two indeed were anxiously confounded by the party hostile to ministers. But it certainly appeared, that considerable distress had arisen from these orders, and particularly from the loss of the American trade, which they had induced. The vote might have been doubtful ; but Lord Castlereagh anticipated

it by announcing, that the orders in council were to be immediately recalled, and a trial made of an opposite system. An order to this effect appeared accordingly in the next gazette.

This step was taken too late. Before the intelligence had reached America, war had been declared against this country. In addition to all the preceding grounds of complaint, the public mind had been inflamed by the unfortunate disclosure of Henry. This person, it appeared, had been employed by general Craig, governor of Canada, to collect information relative to the sentiments entertained by the northern states towards Britain, and towards their own government. So far all was well. But he had also been furnished with credentials for the purpose of communicating with some of the leading men, and of instigating them to dissolve the union, by separating themselves from the southern states. This was a course which could not be justified, even by the very hostile attitude which America had then assumed. It was taken, however, without any concurrence of the government at home, who received no information of it till the mission was concluded, and received then very imperfect information. The blame rested entirely on general Craig, who lived no longer to answer for his conduct. But it was eagerly seized by the ruling party in America,

as the means of exasperating anew the public mind against Britain. Yet the ferment seemed to have subsided, and no new cause of irritation had arisen, when the world was surprised by the appearance of this declaration of war. Without any disposition, as has been seen, to become the advocate of the British system of policy, we cannot hesitate to consider this conduct of America, as decidedly flagitious. We thus characterize it; first, because it bore no just proportion to the injuries received, provoked especially as these had been. The non-intercourse bill, formed the fair and adequate retaliation. It had already proved sufficient to accomplish the grand object aimed at;—the repeal of the orders in council. But the conduct of America appears in a far more unfavourable light, when we view it in relation to the general aspect of Europe, on politics. The potentate, of whom they became the auxiliary, was at that moment waging a war against all national rights, and every principle of good faith. He carried it on with the open design of attaining universal dominion, his pretensions to which, Britain alone resisted. That resistance excepted, there was nothing to save even America, from subjugation. In this unhallowed contest then, she became his coadjutor against herself, and against the world. Had the American rulers possessed any generous sentiment, or any true passion for liberty, the

peninsular contest must have excited in its favour, their warmest interest. If fear, or prudence, deterred them from openly espousing this cause, they would have sacrificed almost every thing, rather than take a decided part against it. This, however, they now virtually did; and the profound indifference with which this war of liberty was uniformly regarded, as if it had been a mere ordinary contest between rival states, will throw a lasting disgrace upon the American name.

The Americans were not well prepared for so great an undertaking. Their navy, which amounted only to four frigates, was evidently incapable of coping with the immense armaments of Britain. It could only hope to carry on a small and piratical warfare, in which indeed it met at first with a success little to be expected: on land, their prospects appeared more brilliant. Canada and Nova Scotia, were looked upon as an easy prey. Their defence was entrusted to a very few British regiments; for ministers had wisely and laudably determined not to weaken the great contest in Europe, by detaching any large force to this remote, and comparatively unimportant quarter. The natives, besides being few in number, were, from their French origin, of doubtful fidelity. It seemed then, that the united population of the states, must afford an army which would over-

whelm all resistance. But this advantage, though great, was counterbalanced by other circumstances. The liberal recompence afforded to labour, in all its departments, rendered it impossible to support a large regular army, without an expense to which the nation was very ill inclined to submit. Their force of this description, was therefore small, and had not been on foot for a sufficient length of time to establish its discipline. The chief dependence was on the militia, an undisciplined and tumultuous body, rather calculated to obstruct, than to carry on military operations. Such troops were peculiarly ill fitted for prosecuting a war in that region of forests, lakes, and swamps, which intervenes between the territory of the United States, and the cultivated districts of Canada.

A natural and strong barrier of the British dominions in North America, was formed by the river St. Lawrence, and by the vast lakes of Huron, Erie, and Ontario, through which it successively passes. To have crossed below the Ontario lake, would have formed the most direct road to the heart of the country, and to the capital. But the river was there at its greatest breadth; and the passage was defended by strong fortifications, and by the concentrated strength of the British forces. To have crossed between

Ontario and Erie, would have been liable to similar objections, though not quite to the same extent. But the branch of the river between Erie and Huron, presented the point, at which this natural barrier could be most easily overcome. Here the Americans possessed Detroit, a fort of some strength. That of Michiniquet, Limonk, and lake Huron, kept in check the Indian tribes, who were well known to be secretly attached to the British interest. The proximity of their back settlements, enabled the Americans to anticipate here the arrival of the British forces. Early in July, general Hull, crossed the St. Lawrence, took possession of Sandwich, from which the British had retired, and made preparations for the siege of Fort Amherstburg. He here published a proclamation, inviting the Canadians to join his standard; and the prosperous aspect of his affairs, induced some to obey the call. But this career of success was of short duration. Captain Roberts, with a small British and Canadian detachment, reached Michillomaik, before any reinforcements could enter that place; and the garrison, which did not exceed 60, surrendered at the first summons. This event was a signal for all the American tribes to declare in favour of Great Britain, and to rise in the rear of the American army. General Hull, in the view of preserving his communications, sent successive large detachments

under major Miller, and colonel M^r Arthur. Meanwhile, general Brock, the British commander, having brought up a small reinforcement, determined, though still inferior in number to the Americans, to advance without delay. Hull, then, began a retrograde movement. Upon being pressed, he withdrew to the other side of the St. Lawrence. General Brock immediately commenced operations against the fort of Detroit, by erecting batteries on the opposite bank. These soon began to act; and in a day or two after, the army succeeded in crossing the river. General Hull, being then summoned, made no farther resistance, but surrendered himself, with the fort and the whole garrison, amounting to upwards of two thousand men, prisoners of war.

This disastrous issue of their first enterprize, may be considered, in general, as the result of those disadvantages, with which the American arms inevitably had to contend. Yet it must be confessed, that the conduct of general Hull exhibited a remarkable measure of weakness and pusillanimity. His first great error consisted in weakening his army, by such large detachments. After the universal defection of the Indians, any attempt to preserve his communications through such an extent of desert, was altogether chimerical. His only hope was, by pushing forward, to have

supported his army upon the resources of Upper Canada. Even after this imprudent reduction, his force was still superior in number to that opposed to him. Though unequal, perhaps, to any offensive operations, it might certainly have saved him from the necessity of submitting, without a single blow, to such a shameful capitulation. Circumstances, it is probable, would ultimately have reduced him to that extremity ; but delay would, at least, have saved the honour of America. It might also have effected a diversion in favour of the war in another quarter. Hull, therefore, egregiously failed ; yet, we may observe, that the Americans from their long disuse of warfare had every reason to calculate upon such a deficiency in the generals, whom they employed.

Another attempt to penetrate beyond the St. Lawrence, was soon after made. It took place at Queenstown, on the branch of the river which lies between the lakes of Erie and Ontario. A part of their army actually crossed ; but those left on the other side, struck with a panic, refused to follow ; the part which had passed were then, after a vigorous resistance, compelled to lay down their arms.

These military events agreeably surprised the British public, as, from the great numerical supe-

riority of the Americans, they had been led to entertain apprehensions with regard to the safety of Canada. The operations at sea produced a great surprise also, but of a very different description. It had never been doubted, that, whatever the Americans might accomplish by land, on the other element they must yield at once to the British navy. Great then was the astonishment and consternation, on learning, that one frigate, and another, had been overcome, and captured: and that there was no success to balance these disasters. The loss was inconsiderable, but the disgrace, and the exultation of the enemy, were very great. Operations at sea, subject to the casualties of winds and waves, cannot be reduced to the same accurate calculation, as military movements. Ministers, however, certainly committed an error in not having a larger naval force stationed on that coast, at the breaking out of the war. They plead that, still anxious and hoping for peace, they did not wish to exhibit themselves in an hostile attitude. But, to a government so disposed as that of America, the display of a force sufficient to make success hopeless, offered the fairest chance of preventing war from being ever declared. Another circumstance tended to put the British off their guard. The American frigates are mounted with the same number of guns, as our ships of war. They are, therefore, virtually of the latter

description. The class, however, to which they nominally belong, while it tended to lull asleep the caution of our commanders, served also to increase the disgrace of defeat.

It is to be hoped, that the naval triumphs of America are now at an end. Yet these first successes are to be lamented, because they tend to plunge her deeper into the contest, until she can no longer extricate herself with honour.

Since the commencement of the war, some negotiations have taken place, and both parties have been anxious to prove, that their wishes were in favour of peace. We doubt much, however, if the disposition was sincere, unless on one side. The chief ground of complaint on the part of America, was already removed by the revocation of the orders in council. But she declared, that having taken up arms, she would not now lay them down, until every disputed point was settled according to her wish. The right of impressment formed the chief remaining object of controversy. The Americans demanded, that a negotiation might be entered into, for the purpose of concerting some plan, which might supersede the necessity of enforcing this right. To this the British government were willing to consent. But they demanded, moreover, that the

exercise of the right itself should in the mean time be suspended. This proposition seems plainly unreasonable. Britain is required, previously to the arrangement of this new plan, to expose herself to all the evils which it alone is supposed capable of obviating. America evidently cherishes the chimerical hope, that, by persevering, she may induce Britain to purchase peace on her own terms. An indefinite prolongation is thus unhappily given to a contest equally injurious to both nations, and from which neither can hope to derive the smallest benefit.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CATHOLIC QUESTION.

THIS is a question of high importance; and it is one which, having become a badge of party, has acquired an interest superior to its actual consequence. About four millions of the subjects of this empire are, on account of their religion, excluded from certain rights and privileges which are enjoyed by the rest of their fellow citizens.— Is this exclusion necessary? does it impose any severe hardship on those subjected to it? does it originate in any sound or liberal views of policy?

It is vain, we conceive, to deny, that there is a marked difference between toleration and power. He who is merely excluded from offices of trust and authority, suffers a hardship differing both in kind and degree, from that which he sustains, who, on account of his religious tenets, is exposed to actual

molestation. But still the one is decidedly a hardship, as well as the other: by some minds, and those of the most elevated class, it will be regarded as still more insupportable. That so large a proportion of the nation should be subjected to it, is therefore a serious malady in the body politic; and it ought to be diligently enquired, whether the granting of these privileges be attended with such danger, as to justify the withholding them to so great an extent?

It is delicate and difficult to predict by reasoning the result of any political change. The most satisfactory, as well as summary mode, seems to be, by enquiring, what consequence has followed in countries where the system in agitation was actually followed? Now in France, it is proved by the examples of Sully and Necker, that no law existed against the introduction of protestants into the highest offices of state. In Russia, these places are thrown open, without the smallest distinction, to all persons of whatever persuasion. We have never heard, that in either of these kingdoms, though both have a highly endowed hierarchy, the smallest danger, either to church or state, has been experienced from this circumstance. These were absolute governments; Poland was a republic. There, for many ages, the most perfect equality prevailed between

the adherents of both religions. During that period, Poland was powerful, and comparatively tranquil. Never, till the system of exclusion on one side began, did she become a prey to those dissensions, which rendered her finally the victim of her more powerful neighbours.

We are not much disposed to bend to authority in matters of political opinion ; yet we must confess, that there is here a weight, against which we should, with some hesitation, have opposed our own judgment. All the statesmen of the first order on both sides, not only Fox, Burke, and Sheridan ; but Pitt, Melville, and Wellesley, have shewn themselves equally zealous to promote this measure. They have even considered a failure in it as ground sufficient for relinquishing office. The second class is nearly in the same predicament ; and we must descend to the third, before arriving at a decided opponent of the Catholic claims. We do not say, that even so great a concurrence ought to bear every thing before it ; but certainly it may stagger the most resolute, and induce them seriously to weigh the grounds of their dissent from such authorities.

The two circumstances which, in the reign of King William, led to this severe proscription of the Catholics were : 1. That there was a pretend-

er to the throne, whose exclusion rested upon his holding that persuasion. 2. That difference of religion was then, throughout Europe, a mighty source of political and personal discord. The first of these circumstances, confessedly exists no longer. We may add that, in regard to the second, the change is not less complete. In vain is it urged, that certain doctors and heads of colleges have pronounced, that the catholic faith remains, and must ever remain, unchanged; that the decrees of the councils of Trent and Constance, are still binding upon all its votaries. In vain is it then alleged and perhaps proved, that anti-social doctrines were promulgated by these councils: such as, that no faith is to be kept with heretics; and that the subjects of heretical princes are absolved from their allegiance. The catholics could not deny the authority of General Councils, without ceasing to be catholics; but they explain away these passages; they deny that such doctrines were ever promulgated by General Councils; erroneously, we believe; but still, denying it, they do not think themselves bound to adopt the doctrines. No man can fairly be made responsible for inferences from his opinions, the force of which he does not admit. Even were it otherwise, the opinions of a few retired scholars are of very little importance, when compared to the general conduct of acting men throughout

Europe. During the course of the last twenty years, crimes in abundance have doubtless been committed in every quarter of it ; but we do not at this moment recollect one, to which the catholic religion, or indeed any other, was the prime instigator.

Much has been said about securities to be demanded in return for the privileges conferred.— We confess ourselves unable to discover any on which the smallest reliance could be placed, except the conciliated spirit of the catholics. The securities proposed, on the contrary, implying suspicion and restraint, would oppose a bar to that amicable spirit, on which all must ultimately depend. This we think would particularly be the case with the proposed *veto*, unless in certain circumstances, to be presently noticed.

That which, incorrectly enough, is called catholic emancipation, does not consist of any single measure, but involves a number of claims, of various descriptions and merit. These may deserve to be considered separately.

The first, and that upon which by far the greatest stress has been laid, consists in admission to civil and military offices. Now it appears to us doubtful, whether there be so much room for complaint

upon this subject, as is commonly imagined. Offices of a very high description, are at present actually held by catholics; and there does not appear any legal obstacle to their reaching the very highest. The following is the tenure on which they hold them. At the period of the union between England and Scotland, the question was agitated, whether the adherents of presbytery, the established religion of the latter kingdom, should be admissible to all offices throughout the united empire. After some discussion, a compromise was made. It was agreed, that an annual act of indemnity should be passed, by which all persons holding offices, who had omitted to qualify according to the last act, should be relieved from the penalties attached to such an omission. Under cover of this indemnity, the language of which, in general, not only the presbyterians, but all the dissenters of England, with all the dissenters and catholics of Ireland, are enabled without molestation to hold any office, which the executive may choose to confer upon them. The catholics urge, that this tenure is precarious. We do not think so. The practice is firmly established; and the spirit of the times, more powerful than any law, is entirely adverse to its being ever discontinued. They allege, that it is not honourable to hold this privilege by mere connivance. The affront, however, is much mitigated by the circumstance of

its being common to them, with the established church, in a sister kingdom. It does not even appear a very severe hardship, although the protestant establishment should insist upon retaining this preference, consisting more in form and appearance, than in reality. After all, if the catholics continue to attach high importance even to this small boon, we should not much object to appease their discontent, by conceding it. But it may perhaps be for them and their friends to consider, as the opposition against their claims is still powerful, whether it would not be wise to concentrate their strength upon objects of more vital importance. These appear to us to be chiefly two: the right of sitting in parliament; and pecuniary provision, to a certain extent, for the catholic clergy.

To be entitled to sit in the great council of the nation, from which all power emanates, is certainly the highest privilege of a British subject. Any class of men, therefore, who are deprived of this privilege, labour under a certain degree of proscription. All protestant subjects have representatives of their own persuasion, and of the same views and interests with themselves. But the catholic has no catholic member to plead his cause; he is subjected to the uncontrolled legislation of persons, whom difference of religious

opinion, so far as that motive operates, tends to render his enemies. As this privilege is important, so there is none, as appears to us, which could so safely be granted. A person in a high official situation might certainly, were he so inclined, employ the whole influence which it afforded him, in propagating his religious tenets. But the catholic members could never form more than a very small minority in the imperial parliament; completely out-numbered by the protestant interest, they could never hope to carry any one measure hostile to the established faith. While the granting of this privilege would thus be attended with no danger, its beneficial effects, we apprehend, would be very great. The catholics, having thus a legitimate organ in the national senate, would, probably, entrust to it their interests. They would no longer have the same temptation, or pretext, to have recourse to irregular and clandestine assemblages, or to any other unconstitutional modes of redress.

The other measure which we would recommend as important, and even essential is, that some provision should be made for the Roman Catholic clergy. It is well known what a mighty influence this body possess over the ill-instructed commonalty, of which the votaries of that religion chiefly consist. As they at present stand,

they must inevitably be hostile to the existing government. During the fatal period of public anarchy, they accordingly were the prime movers of war and sedition. It seems indispensable to the tranquillity of Ireland, that the hostility of this body should be mitigated. No other mode presents itself, besides that of a pecuniary provision. A moderate one would be sufficient, on account of their poverty ; it would thus form no very severe burden on the national revenue. The *Regium donum*, granted to the presbyterians in Ireland, has, we believe, been found productive of the best effects. When this was done, government might, with some grace, bring forward the demand of a veto. It has always appeared to us unreasonable and unprecedented, that any share should be asked in the election of a body of clergy, to whose support nothing is contributed. We cannot wonder that the catholics, in general, should repel such a claim ; and are only surprised, that any part of them should have been found willing to admit it. But the case is changed, when this claim is advanced with regard to a clergy, for whose support provision is made. The catholics cannot surely pretend, after the practice fully established in the continental states, that there is any thing in the nature of their religion, incompatible with such an interference on the part of the government.

Doubtless, these measures could be taken only with the consent and concurrence of the catholics, who, it is asserted by some of their advocates, would consider them inconsistent with the nature of their religion. We cannot discover the inconsistency; but, in that case, the refusal would rest with them; government would have made the conciliatory offer, and would thus have removed every ground, on which a complaint could be founded.

Having thus enquired, as fully as our limits permitted, into the general question of catholic rights, it may now be proper to consider some of the methods employed to obtain their recognition. Towards the close of the preceding year, this body had formed the design of organizing and concentrating their exertions, by forming a general representation of all the catholics throughout Ireland. The design they not only conceived, but actually put in execution, in defiance of the prohibitory mandate of government. It appears to us perfectly clear, that this proceeding was wholly unconstitutional, and such as no administration could be justified in tolerating. For what would this representative body have constituted? It would have been a general assembly of the nation, a catholic parliament. Being, in consequence of the union, the only great public assembly in the kingdom, it would have attracted

within its sphere, all the talents and eloquence of Ireland. The influence would soon have been supreme over those whom it represented ; it would have become the ruler of the kingdom. It met under pretence of mere petitioning ; and the suppression of its proceedings was represented as a violation of that sacred right. But, in order to petition, it is not at all needful, or customary, to form a representative body. This is a right which every man generally chooses to exercise in his own person. Petitions, instead of deriving strength from concentration, are rendered more imposing by the various quarters from which they proceed, and the number of names attached to them. We cannot, therefore, justify the catholic chiefs in this proceeding. On the other hand, we would not account their conduct deserving of very severe censure. They, we firmly believe, were not aware of the tendency of the measure into which they had been hurried. They had no wish to violate the constitution ; and they certainly avoided and discouraged very carefully any approach to turbulence and sedition. On the other hand, since this assembly was to be put down, there appears much to approve in the mode by which administration effected that object. The first proclamation of Mr. Wellesley Pole discovers, indeed, somewhat of heat and precipitation : but all the subsequent

steps bear the stamp of a cautious, moderate, and conciliatory spirit. The catholics finding that they could not be permitted to carry into effect their representative system, had recourse to the legitimate expedient of an aggregate meeting; and the storm subsided.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

THE commerce of India was, from the earliest ages, considered as one of the prime sources of European wealth. The discovery of a western world, and the progress made by Europe itself in all the arts, diminished greatly its relative importance. It remains, however, still very considerable. Now then, that Britain has obtained the exclusive possession of this trade, and is in danger of being excluded from almost every other, the enquiry, how it may best be conducted, becomes of very serious importance.

The question respecting the renewal of the Company's charter, resolves itself into two parts. It respects, 1. Their commercial monopoly.— 2. Their territorial jurisdiction.

In the first establishment of any branch of commerce, which is attended with great difficulties and obstacles, there seems a necessity for granting some extraordinary encouragement. The persons who undertake it encounter risks and hardships; and it is just that a reward should be secured to them in case of success. The manufacturer who invents a new process, receives for a certain period, the exclusive right of employing that process.—He who opens a new branch of trade seems entitled to a similar privilege. And if such a claim could in any case exist, it certainly did in that of the East India Company. A traffic to be carried on upon so distant a theatre, with returns so remote, in opposition to hostile natives, and European rivals still more hostile, necessarily required an uncommon share of vigour and enterprize.—The Company at that time were, we think, justly entitled to the exclusive privilege which they obtained. But there is, undoubtedly, a period, when every such monopoly ought to cease. The present one has in fact been protracted beyond the time when it could be of any use, either to the nation or to themselves. They unequivocally admit, that every branch, unless that with China, is attended with positive loss. There appears, therefore, no time for delay in throwing open the trade to individuals, who will conduct it in a much more economical and advantageous manner.

It seems impossible to raise any objection to this measure, unless drawn from apprehensions that appear utterly chimerical. It is alleged, that the intercourse of the traders and mariners employed in this commerce, with the natives of India, will tend to endanger our eastern empire. But after India, both on the coast and in its interior, has been crowded with British adventurers of every description, we can see no danger whatever arising from the addition of a few persons who visit only the sea ports, and with the sole object of carrying on their pacific occupations. In proportion to the extent of their concern in the Indian trade, would evidently be their interest to support the British dominion in India.

It has been proposed to open the trade to British subjects, only under certain restrictions.—Government too, who have wisely shewn a determination against continuing the entire monopoly, have yet lent some ear to these suggestions. One is, that importation, at least, should be confined to the port of London. Such a restriction, and indeed a local restriction of any kind, appears to us altogether unreasonable. It evidently tends to divert the trade out of that channel, certainly the most advantageous, into which it would spontaneously have turned. Nothing like an argument can be offered for it, except the security which it

would afford for the collection of the revenue.— But all would be lost, if government once began, for purposes of its own, to cramp commercial operations. The invariable rule is, that the revenue officers ought to follow the convenience of trade, not trade the convenience of the revenue officers. The duties on East India commodities would be collected in no other manner, and with no greater risk of contraband, than those on goods imported from any other quarter of the world.

It has also been proposed, and partly assented to, that the exclusive commerce with China, should still be vested in the Company.— The jealousy which is characteristic of the Chinese government, requires, it is said, in all the transactions of trade, a caution and circumspection, which cannot be expected from a promiscuous crowd of private adventurers. On this point, however, it seems quite sufficient to refer to the example of the Americans, who, though of a disposition not peculiarly mild or conciliatory, carry on traffic in the most prosperous manner; without any umbrage ever being taken. The security of the revenue, which is here also introduced, admits of the same answer that has been given above. The true motive which induces the Company to press this object so earnestly is, that the China trade alone of all those which they carry on, oc-

casions no loss, but some little profit. The question is, however, whether the Company, by their long monopoly, have not now received a full compensation for the risks originally incurred; and which, in the case of China, were not very considerable. Or, if it is made a rule, that they shall in no case be sufferers, we should much prefer that a small duty were levied upon the article, than that the traffic in it should continue to be closed against the public.

It is urged, that the opening of the trade with India will by no means be productive of the great advantages which are fondly anticipated. This we partly believe. British merchants are always sanguine. The present could by no means be considered as a new branch of trade. Great benefit results from it, even as now carried on by the Company. Yet there is still much room for improvement, both in point of extension and economical management. This may be expected, when, for the mechanical routine and profusion of joint stock operations, is substituted the anxious activity of private interest. It is difficult to find articles suited to the Indian market; yet what might not be expected from the ingenuity of our manufacturers, were the field fairly thrown open. As for the boast which the Company make, of exporting goods for which there exists no demand,

there cannot be a more idle piece of patriotism. It is lamentable indeed to observe the slow progress made even by the plainest truths. The works of Smith are universally read, praised, and quoted; yet a great commercial company make it their pride to act in opposition to the first principles which that writer has demonstrated. It is certain that if the Company lose by these exports, the nation must lose also. The truth is, that even supposing, as is falsely imagined, exportation to be the sole object of trade, a large import necessarily involves a large export; for thus only could the debt contracted be discharged. If the articles are not sent direct to India, they will be sent to some other country, whence commodities may be drawn, which India will receive in exchange. The result in the end will be nearly the same.

For these reasons we should anticipate, as a national benefit, the entire opening of the trade to India. But it is a very different question, whether the government of those vast regions ought to be wholly transferred from the company to the crown. We are not of the number of those who are disposed to consider the present influence of the latter, such as to inspire very serious alarm. But we certainly apprehend, that it could not receive any large accession, without danger to the other branches

of the constitution. We should dread much less any augmentation arising from internal causes. This would, probably, take its source from the natural course of things, and would be checked and counterbalanced by concomitant circumstances. But there is no such security in the case of a foreign and extraneous influence, such as we now contemplate. Foreign conquest, when extensive, has often occasioned the subversion of public liberty. Parliament, it is evident, has not a constitution at all fitted for exercising the functions of this sovereignty. Besides, if so rich a prize were once thrown loose, the commanding influence of the crown would soon attract it within its own vortex. It does not appear then that this power could be safely entrusted to any other hands than those which at present hold it. It has been represented as an anomaly, to have thus an *imperium in imperio*. This sarcasm would apply equally to any other corporation, endowed with exclusive privileges and jurisdiction. In the case now stated, of a great distant country to govern, which can with no propriety be entrusted to the rulers of the state, we see no expedient so advantageous and so unexceptionable, as that of an *imperium in imperio*.

CHAPTER X.

OF PEACE.

WE have reserved a concluding chapter expressly for enquiring into this subject. Peace, that first of blessings, that balm to the wounds of suffering mankind, was not to be dismissed without serious consideration. The question, when or on what terms, peace may be concluded, is of all those submitted to public consideration, the most nice, the most difficult, and the most important. It is one, too, so darkened by passions and prejudices of every description, that there scarcely exists, perhaps, a man in the kingdom, capable of discussing it with perfect impartiality.

It is a current and popular maxim in this country, that peace never can, nor ought to be made with Buonaparte. We confess ourselves reluctant in-

deed to come to a conclusion so comfortless. Considering his prospects of life, Europe must then have to anticipate a series of warfare as long as that with which she has already been afflicted. We are perfectly aware of the restless ambition of this man, and of the difficulty with which he can be confined within any limits of international law. At the same time, we have no doubt of his violence being so far tempered with judgment, that he would abstain from a war in which there appeared no fair chance of success. It is upon this principle, that the practicability of concluding any peace with him must be founded.

We lay it down as a fixed position, that Buonaparte had formed, and was eagerly prosecuting, the scheme of subjugating all Europe. The few who think otherwise may safely, we apprehend, be left to enjoy their own opinion. So long then as the state of the neighbouring kingdoms afforded a prospect of farther conquest, no solid peace could be expected. All that he would ever grant would be a truce, to serve his own purposes. In such circumstances, we do apprehend, that to conclude peace with him would be absolute weakness. It will then be asked, how low he must be reduced, before such a measure can become expedient? We answer, when there is formed around him a confederacy of states, so powerful, and so united,

as to preclude all reasonable hope of success in renewing the war; there would then be some prospect, that peace might be permanent.

It is not necessary to recur to these principles, in order to decide on the proposals which were sent to this country in the spring of 1812. The mere circumstance of the period of their transmission is decisive. They were sent immediately previous to his departure for the Russian war, and proposals to the same import had been sent at the commencement of every continental campaign. Surely then it is no breach of candour to believe, that his only object was to separate Britain from her continental allies, and to make them view her with distrust and suspicion. Positive and prompt rejection was therefore, we apprehend, the only wise course. Had it not been for the circumstance now alluded to, there was not perhaps, for reasons soon to be noticed, any thing in the nature of the terms throughout, to prevent them in a certain shape from becoming the subject of discussion.

In arranging the terms of any peace with the French ruler, the grand obstacle would evidently be that which his own guilty ambition has raised. He has advanced to Spain a claim founded upon no principle of reason or justice, but which false

pride will make him disdain to retract. This is a cause which we trust Britain will never desert; and the claim is one which cannot be admitted, even to the smallest extent. It has been surmised, that France would remain satisfied with the annexation to her empire of the provinces north of the Ebro. Such terms would be entirely precluded by the present circumstances of that country. It consists not now of subject provinces, to be disposed of at the will of a monarch. It is an assemblage of states, confederated for the purposes of common resistance. The provinces which it is thus proposed to cede, are those which have most distinguished themselves in this patriot war. The glories of Saragossa and Gerona have surpassed all others of which Spain can boast. The general integrity, then, of Old Spain, is an indispensable condition; and it is one certainly which the French ruler will not easily be brought to concede.

From all that we have observed of the present ministry, we feel no apprehension that they should, by the terms of the treaty, compromise the honour of this country, or the security of Europe. We are more inclined to dread lest they should place themselves on too high ground. We have stated what appear to be the indispensable requisites. These are, the integrity of

Spain, and the establishment of a confederacy sufficient to keep in check the power of the French empire. Provided these main objects were attained, and the great difficulties which oppose them surmounted, we should much regret if the work of peace were impeded by artificial or superfluous obstacles. Upon this subject, two observations occur.

In the treaty concluded between the British and Spanish governments, it is stipulated as a condition, that the Spanish government is "never in any case to cede to France, any of the possessions of the Spanish monarchy, in any part of the world." This stipulation appears to us preposterous. Upon the subject of the general integrity of Spain, we have expressed our sentiments. But to say that she is in no case to cede any one of her revolted colonies, or any one of her frontier fortresses, is to raise barriers against peace that are quite unnecessary. It certainly may become highly expedient to purchase so great a good by some such small sacrifice. Fortunately there is in this agreement a singular circumstance by which its effects may be evaded. It is a stipulation made, not by Britain to Spain, but by Spain to Britain. Britain then, to whom it is made, may dispense with its obligation, and in our opinion she certainly ought.

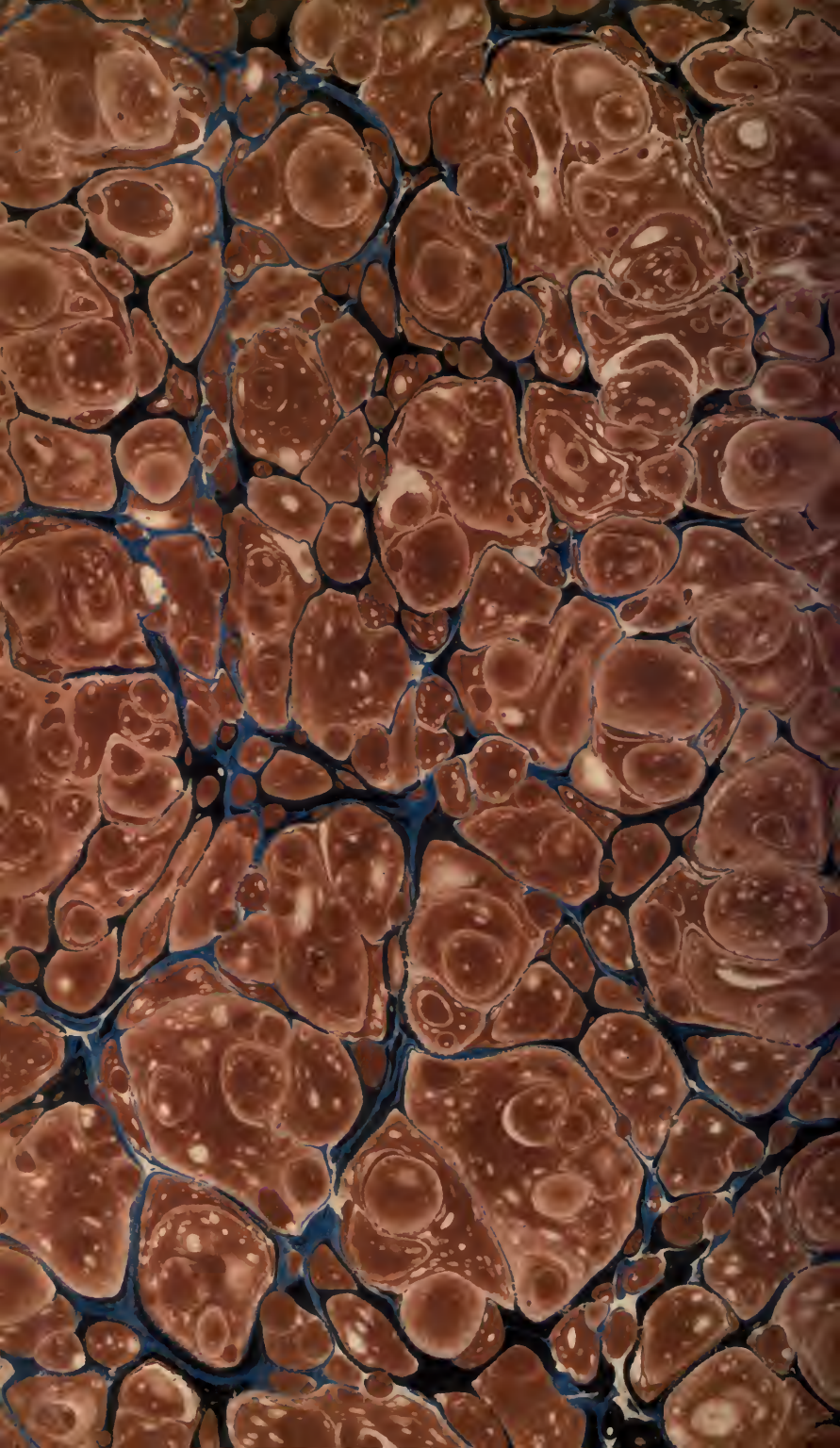
Our next observation is, that provided the essential objects in view could be attained, we should think it adviseable in form and manner, to spare even the unwarrantable pride of our adversary. Doubtless he has no claim in himself to any such forbearance. But since the inscrutable decree of Providence has given to his disposal the fate of so many millions, it were too much for man, when the repose of the world is at issue, to refuse soothing his wayward passions. An illustration of these remarks may be afforded by the terms of the proposition last transmitted. These terms, precisely as they stood, were certainly inadmissible. But they might have afforded an opening on our part, for the following counter-project. Let the French and British armies simultaneously evacuate the Spanish territory, and let Spain be left to determine for herself, how, and by whom she shall be governed. The issue surely could not be doubtful; if it were, our present contest would be vain. There are many details which it would be necessary to arrange otherwise than in the French *projet*. But as to the essential part, the above appears to us one method, and there might probably be others by which our end might be attained, without reducing our adversary to the humiliation of formally renouncing his criminal pretensions.

There are several other particulars connected with the internal policy of this country, which might afford room for observation. But amid the great magnitude of the interests already surveyed, we have insensibly been led to exceed the limits originally contemplated. We have determined therefore to pause, and to reserve any farther speculations for a future volume, should the indulgence of the public encourage us to continue the undertaking.

THE END.







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